

# IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

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DAVID JAYNE HILL



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IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

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# IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

BY  
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## PREFACE

As I send this book to the press I find that, although it has been written in a strictly judicial spirit, appealing only to facts that have been carefully verified, I have described the genesis of the greatest crime which history records.

The fifth year of the Great War reveals the enormity, but it does not yet disclose the dénouement, of this crime; which has filled with grief and smitten with poverty tens of millions of homes, swept from the earth in the vigor of youth the flower of the manhood of several great nations, and leaves vast spaces scorched and blasted by the fires of devastation to be again rendered habitable by the labors of old men, cripples, and half-famished children.

With such a scene spread out before the eyes of the civilized world, vituperation and invective are only signs of impotence. We cannot repair this calamity by denunciation. We cannot prevent its recurrence without suppressing its cause. The first necessity is to perceive wherein is to be found the root of this evil.

At first sight we seem to have discovered it in a single spontaneous personal act, but a little reflection should convince us that no human being alone

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and unaided could perpetrate such a crime as has been committed. To render it possible there is necessary a contributory perversion of human institutions. Through such a perversion this catastrophe has come to pass.

It is, therefore, not merely with William II as a personality that we are here concerned, but with the whole process of seduction by which as German Emperor he has led the German people, at first distrustful of his purposes, to render themselves subservient to the Prussian conception of the state and the ambitions of the Hohenzollern dynasty. Under his tuition and guidance, from motives which he has been able to excite and call into action, they have built up a war-machine of perilous potency without providing means for its rational control. They have rendered the state omnipotent and irresponsible, and have placed its powers at the disposal of a single will that holds itself without accountability to men.

The first four chapters of this volume were printed in *Harper's Magazine* for May, June, July, and August of the present year. They constitute only the vestibule of the present record, which broadens into an outline of Imperial German diplomacy after Kaiser William II became the acknowledged master of Germany's destinies. It culminates in an answer to the primordial question upon which the future Peace Congress will be called upon to act, Who is to be held responsible for causing the Great War? and raises the collateral ques-

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tion, What must be done to prevent a similar assault upon civilization in the future?

The one blessing we may hope for as the outcome of this struggle is that out of the sorrow, desolation, and impoverishment which it will leave behind it enough courage and resolution may survive to render impossible a purpose to repeat it.

DAVID JAYNE HILL.

September, 1918.



**IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER**



# IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

## CHAPTER I

### THE SOURCES OF THE KAISER'S POWER

**T**HE true lessons of a tragedy are not to be found in the supreme moment when the drama has reached the climax of passion, but in the errors of judgment or defiance of moral law that have made it a tragedy.

In attempting at this time an analysis of the sources of the Kaiser's power and the methods employed for its further development, my purpose is to throw a new light, if possible, upon the present European situation by lifting a curtain, not upon the scene as it is set upon the stage of contemporary action, but upon the evolution of the chief character of the drama in the course of his preparation for the rôle which he has cast for himself.

This process of development is possibly more vivid to my mind, and certainly more impressive in my judgment, from the fact that it was my lot to be in Germany in the two most critical periods of the political evolution of the Empire. As a result, there is an inevitable concentration of

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thought, not merely upon the contrast between the two periods—which may be roughly designated as 1888-90 and 1908-14—but upon the causes that have connected them and that explain the transition from the earlier to the later period.

In these two periods my points of view were different, and each had its peculiar advantage. In the first period I saw William II as his own people saw him, and intimacy with them disclosed the estimate they placed upon him. In the second period my personal contacts with the Kaiser himself during more than three years were more intimate and more varied than usually fall to the lot of a foreign ambassador at the Court of Berlin.

At the time of the accession of William II as King of Prussia and German Emperor, on June 15, 1888, after the brief reign of Frederick III, the German Empire had already taken on its definite form and was regarded as a firmly established great power, which might or might not become a menace to the rest of Europe according to the policies by which its future might be determined. The unity of the German states was secure, the power of Prussia was everywhere felt among them, and the work of Bismarck was complete.

That the Empire was an achievement of superior military force on the part of Prussia, and in no sense a creation of the German people, was universally understood. No one familiar with the history of Prussia doubted that its influence would continue to be dominant in the Empire. The Prus-



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sian philosophy of the state had completely triumphed; and to that philosophy, based on monarchical absolutism, the idea of parliamentary control was known to be repugnant. The King of Prussia was by heredity the German Emperor, and no King of Prussia had ever forgotten the traditions of the House of Hohenzollern, which had advanced from a Suabian lordship to the eminence of empire by centuries of conquest, annexation, and unscrupulous diplomacy, seeking alliances wherever additional power or prestige could be obtained, and renouncing them whenever they became a burden or ceased to offer an advantage.

Every intelligent German understood this; but now that the strength and policies of Prussia were at the service of the Empire, the state that had long been the common menace and often the hated enemy had become the protector and potential organizer of all, and the primitive tribalism that had always characterized the Germans, that had attached them to their local princes, that had in its time effectively nullified the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, that had embroiled them in internecine wars, and for centuries had made German territory a prey to foreign conquest and hopeless division, was now merged in a larger tribalism. Germany had at last become self-conscious as a nation, and the mutual hostility that had doomed the German tribes to separatism was now transformed into a general hostility to all that is not German. No longer a mere geographical expres-

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sion, as for centuries it had been, Germany had become through blood and iron the victor over a common foe. Thenceforth, as throughout German history the stronger tribe had dominated over the weaker, so now Prussia, which had evoked the soul of *Deutschtum*, had imposed upon it a superior will, and there arose from a united people the cry, "*Deutschland über Alles!*"

The economic advantages of the Empire had become evident and immense. A great realm for ages divided by a tangle of limited frontiers was now made one. Exchanges had been promoted by the Zollverein, which had afforded a foretaste of the advantages of unity; but now the walls of separation were entirely swept away. Central authority was clearing the ground of local impediments to general industrial and commercial prosperity. But, above all, the provincial spirit of earlier times was vanishing, a universal emancipation of thitherto restricted energies was occurring. Germany, unified, victorious, prosperous, and aspiring, felt a sense of mighty strength and a keen impulse toward wider expansion. Poverty was giving way to wealth, frugality to luxury, and humility to pride.

Before the Germany of 1888 two paths were open. Had Frederick III, surnamed the "Noble," continued to reign a decade, instead of only ninety-nine days, the tendency in government would have been toward liberalism. More and more the Imperial Constitution would have been interpreted in a lib-

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eral spirit. Ministers would have been chosen with reference to the will of the people as expressed in the Reichstag. The Emperor would have reigned, but his Ministers would have governed. The highest ideals of self-government might not have been swiftly realized, and certainly not immediately; for, as all German statesmen and writers have agreed, the Germans have not been bred to self-government. They have always relied upon their princes as more or less paternal rulers, and they would think it presumptuous to dictate to their recognized superiors. But actual government always consists more in a spirit than in a form. Autocracy and democracy are theoretically antithetical; but practically a ruler nominally absolute may listen to the voice of his people, while the head of a democracy may exercise the will and display the qualities of a Cæsar.

For Germany strong central control seemed to be essential, and the character of the Prussian monarchy opened a path toward absolutism in the future development of the Empire. There was, it must not be forgotten, an Imperial Constitution. The whole future of Germany depended upon the interpretation of it. Without changing an article, it could be administered liberally or autocratically; for in all constitutional governments it is the historic spirit that prevails.

The point of conspicuous interest here is the interpretation of the Imperial Constitution that was actually made and accepted, and to this must be

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added the tendency to confirm or to reject it that has been developed during the present war.

Whoever will take in hand the Constitution of the German Empire<sup>1</sup> and read it merely as a document will be surprised, if not already familiar with its contents, at the façade of liberalism that presents itself.

First of all, it is a written constitution; which implies that it is, in effect, a definition and restriction of sovereign power so far as the prerogatives of government are concerned. It begins with a list of independent sovereigns—kings and grand dukes—the King of Prussia heading the list and acting in the name of the North German Confederation, who “conclude an eternal alliance for the protection of the territory of the Confederation and the rights of the same, as well as for the promotion of the welfare of the German people.” It neither renounces nor abrogates the sovereign rights of the monarchs who form this new alliance. It confers a “common citizenship” upon all Germans and enumerates their rights. “Against foreign countries all Germans shall have an equal claim upon the protection of the Empire.” The legislative power of the Empire is conferred upon the Bundesrat and the Reichstag, a majority of the votes of both bodies being necessary and sufficient for the passage of a law. The King of Prussia has merely the “presidency” of the Confederation, with the title of “German Emperor.”

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<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *Modern Constitutions*, Chicago, 1912, I, pp. 325, 351.

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Nothing in all this sounds in the least autocratic. On the contrary, all seems very liberal. The German Emperor is not a monarch, except in Prussia. All the other confederated sovereigns are equally monarchs in their own realms. He is only a "president," *primus inter pares*. Whence, then, his autocratic power?

Ninety-nine one-hundredths of the Imperial Constitution could be transcribed into the constitution of the most democratic federal state without serious criticism. The absolute authority which the Imperial Constitution undoubtedly confers upon the King of Prussia is ingeniously concealed under the most plausible camouflage.

It is impossible here to enter upon a detailed exposition of this device, in which Bismarck believed he had triumphed over parliamentarism, which he bitterly opposed, and had rendered himself as Imperial Chancellor omnipotent in the Empire under a "president" whom he intended to be merely titular. The whole structure of government in the Empire pivots on the action of the Imperial Chancellor, as provided in Articles 15 to 17. The Chancellor is appointed by the Emperor, requires no confirmation, and cannot be removed except by the Emperor. The Imperial Chancellor alone can by his signature give validity to the decrees and ordinances of the Emperor, and "thereby assumes responsibility for them"; but only to the Emperor, who has the right of forcible execution in all the states.

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It did not require very long for the alert intelligence of William II to perceive who, under this organic law, possessed all the power in the Empire. Armed with the prerogative of personally appointing and recalling every one of real importance under the Imperial Constitution, and with the authority to execute by force his own decrees and ordinances, "this young man," as Bismarck rather contemptuously called him, at the age of twenty-nine, ascended what he understood to be, in effect, the imperial throne, regardless of the pretense that it was only the seat of a "presidency." As soon as the death of Frederick the Noble was announced, he promptly took possession of his entire heritage, in the full consciousness that as King in Prussia he could extend the prerogatives of kingship over the entire Empire.

As a youth he had aroused the deep concern of his father. On the twelfth anniversary of his son's birth, Frederick III wrote in his diary:

"It is an occasion for fear when one thinks of the hopes that rest from this time forward upon the head of that child, and what a great responsibility is incumbent upon us toward our country for the direction of his education, since considerations of family and rank, the life of the Court of Berlin, and so many other things render his education difficult."

The condition of Germany in the years that followed in no way diminished the reasons for this solicitude. The return to Berlin of victorious



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armies, the coronation of his grandfather, William I, the universal exhilaration of newly unified Germany, the glory and the praise of Prussia, had all acted upon his sensitive nature like the excitement of a play, and yet it was palpable reality. All the prose of life seemed dull to him. As a young soldier he passed rapidly through the different grades up to that of general; but it was never forgotten by his comrades when at school in Bonn, or in the army, that he was some day to be the head of that glorious Germany that had more than realized the dreams of the medieval time, when mailed knights led their armies over the Alps to be crowned at Rome; and, most of all, the young prince himself never forgot it. All the realities with which he came in contact were veiled in the glamour of a time when it seemed that everything was possible, and that a new and marvelous era had just begun.

Of all those youthful impressions that had touched the imagination of the young Kaiser the deepest was that of the victorious army which in his boyhood had returned from France. Of the three rescripts with which he began his reign, the first, on the day of his accession to the throne, was addressed to the soldiers. "The absolute and indestructible fidelity of the army," runs this first utterance of the young Emperor, "is the heritage transmitted from father to son from generation to generation. . . . We are inseparably united. . . . We are made for each other, I and the army, and

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we shall remain closely attached whether God gives us peace or storm.”<sup>1</sup>

This has been the keynote of the Emperor's entire reign. The army, that was his first thought, for it was that which had created his imperial heritage, it was that which could enable him to read into the Imperial Constitution the full meaning of the Hohenzollern traditions, and make the whole realm what his ancestors had made Prussia, a patrimonial estate to be transmitted by him to future generations of his House.

To William II the army was a dynastic possession. Was it the “nation in arms,” as Germans love to speak of it, that was in his mind? Perhaps, but not the nation controlled by the people's will. The oath of its allegiance is not taken to the Constitution, but personally to the Emperor. The Prussian Constitution openly proclaims this, and explicitly declares, “A swearing-in upon the Constitution of the country does not take place.” As King of Prussia and as Emperor the Kaiser is the head and chief of the Prussian and the Imperial army, to whom alone and without question they owe obedience. He has, therefore, the legal right

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<sup>1</sup> In quoting from the Kaiser's speeches, unless otherwise stated, the text has been taken from one of the following authorities: *Wilhelm II, die Reden Kaiser Wilhelm II* (Reclams Universal Bibliothek, 4 vols.) down to 1912; *The Kaiser's Speeches*, translated and edited by Wolf von Schierbrand, New York, 1903; *The German Emperor as Shown in His Public Utterances*, by Christian Gault, New York, 1915; and Arren, *Guillaume II, ce qu'il dit ce qu'il pense*, Paris, 1912. To avoid multiplying foot-notes, the date and place of utterances are mentioned in the text, which renders easy reference for verification.



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to say, as he has said, "The more people shelter themselves behind catchwords and party considerations the more firmly and securely do I count upon my army, and the more confidently do I hope that my army, either without or within my realms, will wait upon my wishes and my behests." Not only this, but he felt it necessary to say to the new recruits: "You have sworn loyalty to me; that means that you are now my soldiers, you have given yourselves up to me body and soul; there is for you but one enemy, and that is my enemy. In view of the present agitations it may come to pass that I shall command you to shoot your own relatives, brothers, yes, parents—which God forbid—but even then you must follow my command without a murmur." And, in saying this, he knew that he was appealing to an instinct of personal fealty nowhere in the world so strong as that bred into the nature of Germans through the many centuries of obedience when existence depended upon the feudal consecration of a vassal to his lord, who alone could afford protection to his life.

Such an army cannot inquire into the causes, the laws, or the moralities of war. Mute and obedient, it marches where it is ordered to march, stands where it is ordered to stand, and falls, when it must fall, in the faith that God will reward its fidelity with eternal blessedness.

The second thought of the new Emperor on the day of his accession was of the neglected little navy. Already his fancy had taken wings beyond

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the frontiers of the Empire, and led him to dream of its extension beyond the sea. No German Emperor had ever thought it worth while to address a rescript to the navy, but it was William's second act. "Whoever knows the navy," he wrote, "is aware that every man is ready to sacrifice his life for the German flag. . . . In grave moments we shall certainly be united, and in fair or cloudy days we shall always be ready to shed our blood to safeguard the honor of the German flag and the glory of our German Fatherland."

Having thus identified the army and the navy with himself as the two most powerful instruments of his purposes, it was not until the fourth day that he issued a rescript to the people.

The eagerness with which the new Emperor had addressed himself to the army and navy before issuing a general proclamation to the nation as a whole, joined with his reputation for impulsiveness, his inexperience, and his independence of character, awakened in serious minds much apprehension.

In his proclamation of June 18, 1888, to the people, William II apparently endeavored in some degree to mollify this feeling of popular distrust. His filial references to his father, whose noble qualities had won for him the love and trust of the people, aided, perhaps, to dissipate the rumor that they had not been in close accord. "Looking to the King of all kings," he said, "I have vowed to God, following the example of my father, to be a

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righteous and gentle prince, to foster piety and the fear of God, to maintain peace, to be a help to the poor and oppressed, and to be a righteous man, a true protector.”

Notwithstanding this effusion of lofty sentiments, and the formal declaration of public policies, on June 25th, before the Reichstag—in which the hand of Bismarck is plainly visible—there remained for some time in the minds of thoughtful Germans a deep solicitude for the future of the Empire, and a fear, often freely expressed in private conversation, that the impetuosity of the young Emperor might involve the country in serious complications, especially in relation to foreign powers.

Conscious of this, and determined not to be influenced by it, William II took his own counsel, but not without resentment toward his critics. Years afterward he said, referring to this period of doubt: “I assumed the crown with a heavy heart; my capacity was everywhere doubted, and everywhere I was wrongly judged. Only one had confidence in me, only one believed in me, and that was the army; and, with its support, and trusting in our old God, I undertook my responsible office, knowing full well that the army is the mainstay of my country and the chief pillar of the Prussian throne, to which God in His wisdom has summoned me.”

This passage reveals not only Kaiser William's original and persistent basis of self-confidence, but the ground of the public anxiety regarding his want

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of discretion. In a sense, all Germany was military, and relied upon the army for its protection; but many a shoulder was significantly shrugged at the thought of what this imaginative, spontaneous, and as yet undisciplined potentate might rashly undertake to say or do that would involve danger to his country.

With violently militaristic inclinations the Emperor combined a disposition to introduce the practice of personal government and personal diplomacy. The first public acts of the new reign were hardly over before William II, to the dread of the conservatively minded, started out upon a round of personal visits to the neighboring courts. On July 14th he reviewed the fleet at Kiel in the uniform of a Prussian admiral, which no King of Prussia had ever worn. The next fortnight was consumed in calls upon his Baltic neighbors. Cruising from port to port on the *Hohenzollern*, he spent five days at Cronstadt with the Czar of Russia, and followed this with personal visits to the King of Sweden and the King of Denmark. A little later Stuttgart, Munich, Vienna, and Rome were visited; and the year ended with the laying of the first stone of the free port of Hamburg and an inspection of the shipyards of the Vulkan Gesellschaft at Stettin. Already the thought was plainly in the Kaiser's active mind which he afterward expressed in the sentence, "Germany's future lies on the water."

Germany was not at that time quite ready for so

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great a widening of its horizon, but William II evidently intended to make it so. The staid conservatism of Bismarck, tempered with the moderate liberalism of "Unser Fritz," as the Germans affectionately called Frederick III, would have been far more acceptable to those who had played a great rôle in the founding of the Empire; but, so far as sounding the depths of the German soul is concerned, William II was a better psychologist than either of them. The people might distrust the Kaiser's personal diplomacy, but they were inspired by his imagination. He was bent on creating a new age; and Germany, especially Young Germany, was ready to welcome it.

What the new Kaiser most completely represented was that vague entity known as *Deutschtum*. From myth and saga and song, from the clash and rattle of arms and the blare of trumpets, he knew how to evoke it. What Richard Wagner caught and put into music that William II caught and put into government. All that lingered about the Rhine was laid on German lips to sing again. All that was heroic in chivalrous adventure was once more recalled, and it was all made to seem German—*only* German.

Running through all this was the legend of the *Kaiseridee*—the religious sanctity of God's anointed shepherd of the people. Barbarossa had at last awakened from his long sleep and come forth from the mountain fastnesses which had hidden and guarded his tomb until the day of his deliverance,

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and his spirit had become reincarnated in the new Emperor.

It is difficult for strangers to realize the forces wrapped up in the revival of a national culture restored from the mold of ages. As a German writer has phrased it:

“It was as if the golden lute of Walther von der Vogelweide sang again softly through the ruined castles; as if unseen hands touched the bells in the weatherbeaten cathedral, and a glint of the morning rose over consecrated cities. There was a rushing in the deep, as if the treasure of the Nibelungen moved in the green house of the water; there was a thrill in the air, as if Siegfried’s horn sounded in the distance.”<sup>1</sup>

If the dim remembrance of an old, almost dead, national culture worked such wonders, how much more would a new, living culture be the sanctuary around which in the future the Germans should gather from near and far? German power and German beauty—these should be the goals of the new Germany! As the fathers had made the Rhine a German river, so the sons should make the ocean a German lake! “*Noch lebt der alte Gott in unserem Blut!*”

Frankly, this is a revival of primitive paganism. “The old German God” is not the sorrow-burdened Saviour of the world. He is a god of battles, made

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<sup>1</sup> Fuchs, *Der Kaiser, die Kultur, und die Kunst*, Munich and Leipzig, 1904.



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potent through the swing and blows of his hammer. He is not the All-Holy, or even the Creator of the universe, the All-Father. He is a purely tribal divinity, the apotheosis of tribal power and tribal hate, whose plans and protection are for Germans only. How otherwise can he with any sense always be referred to as "the old *German* God"? Only thus can he be spoken of as "our unconditional and avowed ally." "Unconditional," because whatever Germans do is right; and "avowed" because success in arms is the sufficient evidence of his alliance.

What made William II the master of German destinies was the fact that he, more than any other, was the embodiment of these tribal rhapsodies.

And, in spite of all opposition, he became the master. His idealism, his impetuosity, his self-confidence, to Bismarck appeared positively dangerous. To many the venerable Chancellor, the virtual creator of the Empire, seemed the essential counterpoise and balance-wheel to the young Emperor's spontaneity; and this was the opinion of Prince Bismarck himself, who intended to keep "this young man" within proper bounds.

It is unnecessary here to repeat the story, so often told, of the "dropping of the pilot."<sup>1</sup> Bismarck himself believed it to be impossible. When

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<sup>1</sup> A very circumstantial account, and the most recent, is given in *Germany Under Three Emperors*, by Princess Catherine Radziwill (Catherine Kolb-Danvin), London, etc., 1917, to which I am indebted particularly for the quotations from Holstein, Bismarck's confidential clerk in the Foreign Office, and other quotations.

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they appeared upon the streets of Berlin, where I often saw them pass in open carriages, the Chancellor received as many signs of deference and devotion as the Emperor. In truth, to all observers, in 1888-89, Bismarck seemed to be the cornerstone of the whole imperial structure. The best asset of the young Emperor was the fact that this seasoned statesman was by his side as friend and counselor.

In the Emperor's eyes the country squire, whom his grandfather had made a prince, was, notwithstanding his ability and his services, merely the creature and the temporary instrument of the Hohenzollern dynasty, for that alone possessed true authority, which God had directly bestowed upon it. The difference, he thought, must be understood.

Personally, William, as Crown Prince, had learned much from the astute statesman, and Bismarck's great services to the House of Hohenzollern were distinctly recognized by him; but from the moment of his accession the Emperor felt that he was overshadowed in the world's esteem and made distinctly secondary—he who should be first.

For the break, which in the Emperor's mind was inevitable, there were many reasons. Not only was the Prince too conscious of his importance, but he was scheming to cast the mantle of succession to the chancellorship upon the shoulders of his unprincipled son, Count Herbert, for whom he had an inordinate affection. The Prince had aimed to stamp out Socialism; but William intended, to the



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Chancellor's disgust, to destroy it as a party by winning it as a beneficiary. Bismarck, after forming the Triple Alliance with Austria and Italy, believed he had a reinsurance for peace in a close friendship with Russia; but William, who had seen with indignation the grim fortifications at Brest-Litovsk—a name recently made famous by almost farcical peace negotiations—had conceived a profound distrust of the Czar's purposes, and was disposed to cultivate the good-will of France and hold firmly to the Austrian alliance.

It was a risk of some magnitude for the young Kaiser to base the Chancellor's overthrow on a question of foreign policy, in which he was regarded by all Germans as a past-master. It was, therefore, on an issue of personal primacy that the rupture was staged.

On March 15, 1890, having reprimanded the Chancellor on the day before, through a court officer, for having held conversation with Windthorst, chief of the Catholic party, without the previous assent of the Emperor, and having received the Chancellor's reply that he would allow no one to say whom he should receive in his house, William II drove to the palace of the Prince and demanded to see him in person.

Although it was ten o'clock in the morning, the Chancellor was still in bed and had to rise and dress. A stormy interview followed, in which William II asked Bismarck what he meant by negotiations with Windthorst without previously con-

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sulting him. The Prince replied that there were no negotiations, only a private conversation; whereupon he was instructed that in the future he must keep the Emperor informed when he conferred with parliamentary leaders.

Deeply resentful, the Prince replied that he could not permit interference with his relations with any one, affirmed that it was only in compliance with a promise to William I that he had consented to remain in the service of his grandson, and that he was ready to retire.

Contrary to the Chancellor's expectation, the Emperor cried out, "I accept your resignation," and left the room in a rage, without being accompanied by the Chancellor, as the etiquette of the court required.

For days Bismarck struggled with his pride, his ambition, and his indignation, holding back the resignation on the ground that so important a step required careful preparation. In the end it was peremptorily sent for and delivered. Unwilling to admit that he was forced out of office, the Prince aimed a parting arrow in his words to Moritz Busch, that he "did not wish to take upon his shoulders at the close of his career the stupidities and mistakes of a presumptuous and inexperienced mind."<sup>1</sup> To Holstein, who had worked with him in the Foreign Office, he said: "It is all over, and destiny wants me to look upon the destruction of

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<sup>1</sup> Busch, *Bismarck: Some Secret Pages of His History*, New York, 1904.

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my own work. . . . Can you understand what it is to feel that one has become nothing after having been everything?"<sup>1</sup>

It was the Kaiser's victory. Men called him light-minded, but he had appropriated the last ounce of personal power, and that is what he desired. The appointment of Caprivi, a general without experience in foreign, or even civil, affairs, as Chancellor seemed the acme of rashness. Yet no one was disposed to challenge "this young man."

At one moment, after the indignities heaped upon the fallen Chancellor when the Kaiser intervened to prevent his promised audience by Francis Joseph at Vienna, and other honors he was expecting on the occasion of his visit to Austria to attend Count Herbert's wedding to an Austrian lady, Bismarck was disposed to react openly against his royal and imperial master. Holstein had gone to him to negotiate a peace with the Kaiser, and as a last argument had said, what if his sovereign should in his anger have him imprisoned. "I wish he would," answered the old Prince; "that would be the end of the Hohenzollern dynasty."<sup>2</sup>

But this was only an ebullition of the Prince's long pent-up wrath. Bismarck himself had closed the door to revolution. In framing the Imperial Constitution he had introduced a "joker" for himself, but the card was in the Emperor's hand. He

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<sup>1</sup> Radziwill, *Germany Under Three Emperors*, p. 344.

<sup>2</sup> The same, p. 356.

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had made the Emperor absolute, irresponsible, with no tribunal before which he could be summoned, and no legal power in the hands of government or people by which his personal will could be controlled. He who had dealt a death blow to parliamentary government could not appeal to the Reichstag, which he had emasculated. At a word from the Emperor it would be dissolved. If it resisted, the army was there to execute the law. In the Bundesrat the case was equally hopeless. Nothing but a general revolution could shake the power of the Kaiser. The ease with which the Chancellor had been overthrown by a single message, delivered through a court officer, was a conclusive demonstration of his utter impotence, except as he spoke by the Emperor's authority.

There was, moreover, something else besides the Constitution and the army; there was the German tribal religion, of which the Kaiser was the High Priest. "My grandfather," the Emperor said to his faithful Brandenburgers a few days before Bismarck's fall—"my grandfather considered that the office of king was a task that God had assigned to him, to which up to the last moment he consecrated all his forces. That which he thought I also think, and I see in the people and the country that have been transmitted to me a trust that is confided to me by God, which it is my duty to increase. . . . Those who wish to aid me in that task, whoever they are, I welcome with all my heart; those who oppose me in this work I shall crush."

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The overthrow of Bismarck was a convincing object-lesson. Fortified by the law, the army, and the religious sentiment of the people, the Kaiser was supreme.

But William II was too intelligent to permit himself to be considered ungrateful for the immense services rendered to the House of Hohenzollern by the recognized creator of the German Empire. In every way he tried to make it appear that the dismissal of the Chancellor was to him a painful act of duty. Two days after the Prince was relieved of his office the Kaiser telegraphed to Count Gorz Schlitz at Weimar: "I suffer as if I had for a second time just lost my grandfather. But God has so willed it. I must support it." And then, as if to justify his action as a high political necessity, he adds: "I have the position of officer of the watch on the bridge of the Ship of State. The course remains the same; and now, full steam ahead!"

But neither in spirit nor in fact did the course remain the same. Between William II and Prince Bismarck, who was by no means pacified by being created Duke of Lauenburg at the time of his retirement, there were differences of view so wide as to be utterly incompatible, and this was recognized by both. The result was that the influences emanating from Bismarck's estate at Friedrichsruhe had to be officially repressed. On May 23d a general order was issued by the new Chancellor, Caprivi, to all the diplomatic representatives of

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Germany to inform the governments to which they were accredited "that His Majesty distinguishes between the Bismarck of other days and the Bismarck of the present," and that "no importance should be attached to what the press may say regarding the views of Bismarck."

A later Chancellor, Prince von Hohenlohe, who heard from the Kaiser's own lips, as the Prince reports in his memoirs, the story of the estrangement, quotes William II as saying to him—and for this revelation the Kaiser never forgave him—that for the three weeks before his dismissal of Bismarck he had had "a devil of a time" with him, the question being "whether the dynasty Bismarck or the dynasty Hohenzollern should reign."<sup>1</sup>

In the public speeches immediately following Prince Bismarck's retirement the Kaiser took pains to make it understood, both at home and abroad, that in foreign relations it was the head of the state alone who should be reckoned with. At a banquet in the royal palace at Christiania, on June 29, 1890, for example, he said: "I consider it necessary for a sovereign that he should personally inform himself about everything; that he should form his opinion for himself; that he should become acquainted with his neighbors, in order to establish and maintain good relations with them: such is the

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<sup>1</sup> Prince von Hohenlohe's Memoirs were not published until after his death, in 1906. His account makes it indisputable that the Kaiser's motive was personal supremacy. The conversation with Windthorst, the Prince considers, was only an excuse. See Illustrative Document No. 1, at the end of this volume.



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object of my foreign journeys." In the next six months he made six visits to foreign courts.

It was this personal diplomacy, this attempt to base international relations upon personal sentiments and compliments and toasts after dinner, that had seriously disturbed the mind of Bismarck; and, as we shall have occasion to see in following the consequences of this policy, in opposition to a policy of foreign affairs based on legal principles and a reasoned understanding of mutual interests, it is this attitude that has kept the German Empire in a ferment and all Europe in a state of periodical crises ever since the reign of William II began. "It is very natural," said Bismarck, after his resentment had cooled down, "that a mentor like myself does not please him, and that he rejects my advice. An old cart-horse and a young courser go ill in harness together. Only political problems are not so easy as a chemical combination: they deal with human beings."<sup>1</sup>

In the opinion of William II, the only human beings to be considered in international politics were the sovereigns; but Bismarck understood that diplomacy has also to do with the interests of nations. The Prince had warned him not to trust to merely personal relations and impressions, but the Kaiser had pursued his own course. His early visit to

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Liman, *Der Kaiser*, Berlin, 1904, endeavors to show that Bismarck was not really greatly mortified by his dismissal and bore no grudge against his young master; but this view cannot be sustained in the light of the evidence. Even Hans Blum, a partisan of Bismarck, *Das Deutsche Reich zur Zeit Bismarcks*, Leipzig, 1893, does not dispute this.

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Alexander III, a man of experience and calculation, immediately after his accession as German Emperor, had left him with a deep prejudice against Russia. The Czar had not taken his youthful enthusiasms very seriously, and the Kaiser had not failed to resent this. When, therefore, Bismarck insisted that care must be given to the friendship with Russia, William II was disposed to think lightly of it.

What Bismarck had feared was a possible alliance between France and Russia, both of which were left isolated by the situation that had been created on the Continent by the formation of the Triple Alliance, begun by the defensive agreement of Germany and Austria in 1879, and completed by similar agreements between Austria and Italy and Germany and Italy in 1882. But the friendship of Prussia with Russia was a far older one, and in Bismarck's mind it was still of great importance to Germany. He had been anxious to retain it, and had taken measures to do so. In fact, had he not feared making Germany altogether dependent upon Russia, and liable in this relation to be held in check by her in any future attack upon France, he might even have preferred an alliance with Russia rather than with Austria; for, as he once said, "In point of material force I held a union with Russia to have the advantage." It was, in fact, the policy which Emperor William I would have preferred.

Bismarck's *alter ego*, Herr Holstein, the cunning spider at the center of the web in Wilhelmstrasse,



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has left on record a sentence that reveals the main-spring of Bismarck's diplomacy with a sudden glare of light: "With Russia as an ally we might crush Austria, but we could never destroy France, and it is France that must be destroyed before the German Empire can develop itself, as it is essential it should do in the future."<sup>1</sup> A friendship with Russia strong enough to secure her neutrality in the future as in the past, but not the obligations of an alliance—unless it became necessary to peace—that, in Holstein's mind, was the policy of Bismarck. "You see," he went on, in a confidential interview, "the next war is bound to be for us a question of existence. If we fight it successfully, then we shall be able to proceed to a general disarmament of Europe, together with a restriction of our own military forces. Therefore, we ought to watch carefully for the moment when this war can be brought about with the minimum of risk to ourselves and the maximum to our foes. When we consider this moment to have arrived we must begin it, whether we like it or not; and what neither Bismarck nor myself was sure of was, whether Russia would allow us to seize it, whereas with Austria no such complication could be feared. . . . With Austria beside us—who knows—perhaps one or two Balkan States, we can crush both France and Russia and neutralize England."<sup>2</sup>

Equally with Bismarck, William II understood

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<sup>1</sup> Radziwill, *Germany Under Three Emperors*, p. 266.

<sup>2</sup> The same, p. 266.

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the importance of another war in Germany's program of development; but, whereas the old Chancellor found the real enemy in France, the Kaiser found him in Russia. The difference was based upon different conceptions of empire. Bismarck contemplated a Germany ultimately dominant on the continent of Europe at the least possible expense. Hence a general reduction of armaments when that position was once attained. But William II wished no such limits. He aimed at world predominance, and understood that the disarmament of Europe would terminate the necessity for kings and emperors altogether. Bismarck was planning as a Prussian statesman, William II as proprietor of the Hohenzollern dynasty. From the beginning he looked toward the East as the path of empire. It was not France but Russia that blocked the way. A permanent friendship with Russia was, in his eyes, impossible. The Balkan Peninsula, the débris of the Ottoman Empire, Constantinople—these were the real pawns in the imperial game. Bismarck believed nothing of this. For him Germany's greatness would consist in drawing the Austrians into the German union; the permanent weakening of France, to be kept in conflict with Great Britain over the spoils of colonial expansion; the development of Russia on the Asiatic side; and the consequent military domination of the European continent by Germany with a minimum of cost. William II wanted as much as possible of all this, but also new territories and access

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to the southern waters, a route to the Far East. In 1890 this was only a vague dream, but across every vista of the vision loomed the shadow of a resisting Russia.

In these first years of the Kaiser's reign was sounded the key-note of his personal use of power. "I can hardly believe that he will ever bear to have a Chancellor with a private opinion of his own," Bismarck once remarked. "That," he went on, "means a return to absolute government, which requires different qualities from those of William II." When asked why he spoke of a "return" to absolute government, and not of a continuance of it, since he himself had governed absolutely, the Prince replied: "Ah! that was quite a different matter. I may have been autocratic, but I never boasted of it!"<sup>1</sup>

We now know what the Kaiser's boasting has brought upon Germany, upon Europe, and upon the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Radziwill, *Germany Under Three Emperors*, p. 363.

## CHAPTER II

### THE KAISER'S METHODS OF PERSONAL CONTROL

**L**IKE money put out at usury, power in government grows with astonishing rapidity. When it is both concentrated and undisputed, as in the case of imperial absolutism, it soon becomes irresistible.

No better example of the rapid centralization of power can be found in history than the growth of Kaiser William II's personal control not only of German action, but of German thought.

William I, who had the habits of mind of a Prussian king, had hardly become accustomed to think imperially—a task which he intrusted chiefly to Bismarck—when his reign came to an end by his death. Frederick III, an invalid from his accession, hardly had time as Emperor to consider any great question. But William II was a child of the Empire. His thought was imperial from the beginning.

Germany, too, was ready to think imperially. The reaction from the constraint of small kingdoms and the parochial rule of tiny principalities was

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a stimulus that made all kinds of mere bigness objects of aspiration in which all Germans were prepared to participate. There was a revulsion from the littleness of the past and an abnormal craving for modernity.

On the material side, as he has more than once assured me, the great example in the mind of William II was America. Too remote to be a rival, in the political sense, as it then seemed, its large ways were most interesting to the young Kaiser. They awakened his interest and fired his imagination. Americans who could tell him of the great achievements of the United States in its economic development were always welcome guests. Although in other respects not much approved of, America was the model upon which the Kaiser built his plans of material prosperity, and the great movements that quickened the economic life of the Empire were initiated by men who took the pains, first of all, to learn the lessons of America. The sympathy between the two countries at that time was intense and sincere. Friendship was not so much sought for as spontaneously offered. It was not apparent that the interests of the two peoples would ever anywhere come into collision. The world, it was felt, was large enough for the full development of both; and, with sincere pride and appreciation, a German Geheimrat somewhat later called his book about the United States *The Land of Unlimited Possibilities*.

Even a young country, the United States had

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proved, could become great. The late arrival of the German Empire in the family of nations should not, therefore, the Kaiser thought, prevent it also from attaining a great position as a world power. It, too, had "unlimited possibilities." What could not be accomplished with the resources and within the limits of the German Empire, as it existed, must be accomplished by extending the power of the Empire beyond its frontiers, and even beyond the sea. This ambition, which the Kaiser lost no opportunity of promoting in his people, he himself pre-eminently entertained. Nothing has so facilitated the growth of William II's personal power as the conviction of his subjects that he was sincere in his constantly reiterated assurances that the increase of his personal authority was identical with the increased power of the Empire, which they always translated into the tacit assumption that this meant the wealth, the prosperity, and the glory of all the German people.

How much of this ambition was personal and dynastic few persons felt disposed to inquire. A simple test would, however, have answered the question. No one ever doubted that there is room enough in the world for the prolific German race, but William II thought that German territory should increase with the German population, in order that as few Germans as possible should cease to be his subjects. To this end they must be restrained from migration until the Empire could be so expanded as to provide homes for all Germans



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under the German flag. When this could not be done, in every foreign land the Teuton must be a missionary for German culture and German trade. Germans, wherever they lived, should have their own schools and their own churches, where the maternal language should be kept alive.

In this respect the Kaiser's policy was a glaring anachronism. No other monarch in the world insisted that personal fealty to himself must be carried into foreign lands. Seldom, perhaps, did the faithful surmise that the Kaiser's interest in them was chiefly dynastic, regarding them not as Germans, but as his subjects.

That, in the circumstances, there should be a Pan-German party and propaganda in Germany was inevitable. We know what it has accomplished since the organization of the *Alldeutscher Verband* in 1894. In every form, from popular tracts to erudite volumes, its literature has been scattered broadcast among the German people. Appealing ostensibly to racial unity and sentiment, its underlying motive is imperial. Wherever a German goes, he must never forget that he is a German; and, as a German, he owes perpetual fealty to the Kaiser.

One would have supposed that at least one class of Germans would resist this influence and would defend the broad cosmopolitanism which characterized the German universities in the early part of the nineteenth century. It is a matter of surprise, therefore, that the learned world of Germany, in all the constituent states of the Empire, including

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teachers and professors, from the universities down to the lowest schools, should become rabid imperialists and adulators of Prussian aims and Prussian methods.<sup>1</sup> To their keeping had been intrusted the treasure and ideals of academic freedom, the traditions of personal political independence as its necessary support, and the example of their forerunners who were responsible for the democratic and constitutional movement of 1848, which a little more political experience might have made triumphant. It was well known that it was Prussia that had rendered that development abortive; that Prussia had never been a home of culture, as even the smallest German principalities had been; and that every flower of philosophy that by its own vigor and without the nurture of the state had ever blossomed on the great northern plain had been cut down, as Immanuel Kant and William von Humboldt had been—Kant, who boldly declared that there would be no lasting peace in the world until all states were republican, and was publicly snubbed for it by the King; and Von Humboldt, who fell into disfavor because he championed pop-

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<sup>1</sup> In a discourse of December 4, 1890, at the first session of the Commission on Secondary Education, William II violently opposed classical education, as contrasted with technical instruction; insisted upon the duty of teachers to inculcate right doctrines regarding the government and to see that students were not "seduced" by "political novelties"; and asserted, regarding the "new edifice of the state," the Empire, "I can judge of it with absolute certainty, *for I am at the apex of all the questions having reference to me.*" "Consider the young generation which you prepare for the defense of the country," he continues. "*I have need of soldiers, we want vigorous men who can also serve their country as intellectual leaders and functionaries.*"



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ular liberty, and sought solace for his wounded spirit by leaving Prussia and exercising his great talents in more congenial climes.

That the teachers and writers of Germany were in twenty years transformed into "Byzantines," as they privately accuse one another of having become, was indeed unnatural; and the phenomenon is inexplicable until the process by which it was accomplished is explained.

Even the possibility of such a transformation does not become apparent until one considers that in Germany, since it has been Prussianized, the state is omnipotent, and that all education in Germany is a function of the state. All teachers being state officials, the employment and promotion of professors are regulated by state authority; and all state authority is, in the last analysis, an emanation of the power of the Emperor. Nothing of importance can happen in Germany in direct and open opposition to his will.

The decapitation of Bismarck as Chancellor all the world knows; but it does not, perhaps, recall how, near the commencement of his reign, William II began his program for the subjugation of the professors.

In 1844 there was established at Berlin the "Verdun Prize," in memory of the separation of the Carlovingian empire into the distinct nationalities of Germany and France by a treaty of 843. It had been the annual custom to award this prize to the most meritorious historical work of the year,

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and in 1894 the Academy of Berlin had unanimously awarded it to the well-known historian, Von Sybel, for his great work, *The Foundation of the New German Empire*. To the amazement of every one, when the award was submitted to William II for his ratification, the Kaiser drew his pen through the name of Von Sybel and awarded the prize to Erdmannsdörfer, a Heidelberg erudite, who had produced a rather crude work on the Great Elector.<sup>1</sup>

What, then, was the fault of Von Sybel? Certainly not that he was not a loyal Prussian, wholly devoted to the Hohenzollern dynasty; but the Emperor had indicated his wish that German historians should in the future give to the representation of the Prussian monarchs a "heroic grandeur." This Erdmannsdörfer had tried to do for Frederick William, but Von Sybel had had the hardihood to make Bismarck the hero of the founding of the Empire, and relegated King William I to second place!

If any German had deserved the gratitude of the Prussian dynasty, it was undoubtedly Treitschke, who with incomparable fervor had for more than two decades poured forth a volcanic stream of weird eloquence blazing with satire and invective against democracy, and had frescoed with all the colors of the rainbow the House of Hohenzollern as the Savior of Europe. Not only so, but at Kiel,

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<sup>1</sup> For further details, see Guillard, *L'Allemagne nouvelle et ses historiens*, Paris, 1899.

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as professor, he had been hissed by the Danes, and at Freiburg had been personally menaced, because of his eulogy of the Prussians—all this before the advent of the Empire—to a point where it was necessary to pack up and hastily leave the place. Yet this martyr—for he had suffered deeply for his devotion to Prussia—although he had hailed with an outburst of joy the accession of William II as the salvation of the Empire, was caused to feel the power that could make and unmake the idols of the day.

Venturing in the self-confidence of his great fame to draw a picture of Frederick William IV which reflected upon the foibles of William II, Treitschke had aroused the Kaiser's wrath.

"Having imagined," wrote Treitschke, "with the fancy of an artist a world of magnificent plans, being now the master, Frederick William wished to realize them. Weary of the parsimony of the Court of Berlin, in order to maintain a state of sumptuousness worthy of the Hohenzollerns, he hoped to assemble all that was great in the realm of art. He was never happy except when emitting a flood of thoughts and sentiments. 'I could not rest until I had spoken,' he wrote one day to a friend."<sup>1</sup>

The picture was too accurate to be mistaken. The old professor fell under disfavor, and he was threatened with having the archives closed to him. A worse punishment would have followed upon the least sign of resentment, but the death of Treitschke

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<sup>1</sup> See Guiland, as above.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

ended the process of humiliation. As in the case of Bismarck, every court of appeal was closed to him. Had he not written, "The state is power"?<sup>1</sup>

The case of Quidde, the Munich professor, is less pathetic and more amusing. In 1894 he published in a magazine, and afterward in a pamphlet, an article entitled "Caligula."<sup>2</sup>

"The young prince," wrote Quidde, ostensibly of the Roman Emperor, "was suddenly called to his high office before obtaining maturity. His father, Germanicus, had succumbed to a vicious disease in the prime of his years. The people had adored the deceased man, from whom they had hoped to secure an increase in freedom and happiness. The position of Caligula's father as presumptive heir to the throne had been delicate enough during the declining years of old Emperor Tiberius and was made still more trying by the haughty and passionate temper of Caligula's mother, who was an extremely unpopular woman.

"The new Emperor was at first considered to be an unknown and enigmatic character and everybody expected that Marco, the all-powerful Minister of State and Prefect of the Guards, would rule in fact, especially since the imperial house was greatly indebted to him. But soon the great states-

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<sup>1</sup> Of Treitschke Guiland says: "He is not a veritable historian. A man of sentiment and imagination, he needs to be carried away by his subject, to be inspired by enthusiasm, to storm or to curse. He is incapable of studying scientifically a question in itself: it is necessary for him either to love or to hate."

<sup>2</sup> A copy of Quidde's *Caligula* may be found in the Congressional Library at Washington.

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man fell into disgrace and the Emperor assumed complete control of affairs and established a purely personal régime."

For this Quidde was summoned to answer to a charge of *lèse-majesté*. "Whom have you in mind in writing this article?" demanded the cross-examiner. "Caligula, of course," was the prompt reply. "Whom have *you* in mind, Mr. Solicitor?"

The government, for once, was completely cornered. The proceedings were dropped, but the pamphlet is said to have run through more than thirty editions.

More successful was the discipline administered to Professor Delbrück, of Berlin, a devoted Prussian, who had, nevertheless, in 1898, the courage to criticize in his *Preussische Jahrbücher* the brutal policy applied to the Danish subjects in Schleswig-Holstein. A reprimand and a fine of five hundred marks served as a caution to those who, on grounds of justice, were disposed to pass judgment on the government. So long as professors and writers did not express doubts of the rightful omnipotence of the state, of the divine appointment and holy mission of the Hohenzollern dynasty, or of the high destiny of Deutschland, they were permitted to lecture and write about almost anything they pleased, and this is what is now understood in Germany by "academic freedom." Attacks on religion and on the family, and even atheism and socialism of the most rampant kind, pass without official censure;

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but no one is permitted with immunity to cast reflections upon the government.

But the power of the Kaiser consists in practice far less in what he can prevent than in what he can promote. From top to bottom civil life is controlled by the long line of his servitors, whose interest always lies in courting his favor as well as in avoiding his displeasure. To be a guest at his table, to be the recipient of his confidence, to be rewarded with a word of his approval, is a passport to esteem in every community of Germany. By the ignorant, obedience to his will is regarded as a religious duty. To inculcate this duty on the part of the people is esteemed a service to the state. To glorify the state on all occasions, therefore, becomes an official obligation which it is deemed a grave delinquency to disregard. Why should even chemists, or physicists, or mathematicians—not to speak of historians and philosophers, who must discuss such matters—be expected to obstruct their own promotion by a failure to meet this expectation? And when in time of need a manifesto, declaring the innocence of the German army in the invasion of Belgium and its right to impose the superiority of German culture upon neighboring peoples, was passed around for signature by the most eminent university professors and men of science in the Empire, for the purpose of balancing this violation of neutral soil by the weight of their great authority, what wonder that they were induced to sign a false and purely dogmatic statement in open con-



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tradition of documentary evidence in the hands of every scholar in every neutral country?

Knowing personally many of the ninety-three distinguished Germans who signed this manifesto in 1914, it is difficult to believe that they were actuated by mere vulgar fear of what might happen to them if they refused to sign. Their act was the fruit of twenty-five years of subservience so habitual that they solemnly proclaimed a falsehood because they had been accustomed to think that whatever the Emperor ordered could not be wrong. He had so shaped public opinion that the political and ethical standards of judgment in Germany had ceased to be individual.

It is difficult for men not indoctrinated in the imperial cult to accept such an explanation. But listen to the most celebrated scholar in Germany, the son-in-law of Mommsen, Wilamowitz-Möllerndorff. He is speaking of the superiority of Prussia to Athens:

“Your sages,” he says, in an apostrophe to the Athenians,—“your sages tell us of that highest love which, freed from all bodily entanglements, spends itself on institutions, on laws, on ideas. We Prussians, a rough, much-enduring tribe of Northerners . . . believe that love is on a higher level when the fullest devotion to an institution and an idea is linked with an entirely personal devotion to a human being. . . . When our children have scarce learned to fold their little hands before God, we set a picture before them, we tell them to recognize

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the noble features; we tell them, 'This is our good King.' Our young men, when they are of age to bear arms, look with joy and pride on the trim garb of war, and say, 'I go in the King's coat.' And when the nation assembles to a common political celebration, the occasion is no Feast of the Constitution, no Day of the Bastille, no Panathenaic Festival. It is then that we bow in reverence and loyalty before him who has allowed us to see with our own eyes that for which our fathers dreamed and yearned, before him who ever extends the bounds of the kingdom in freedom, prosperity, and righteousness; before His Majesty the Emperor and King."

Here is the secret of Junkertum, the old feudal relation of a vassal to his lord, beside whom constitutions, conventions, and treaties are mere scraps of paper! Did not King Frederick William IV once say, speaking of a proposed constitution, "Never will I permit a piece of paper to come between God and my people"? Safe from divine condemnation in "the trim garb of war," covered with righteousness by "the King's coat," the German soldier, regardless of "institutions, laws and ideas," goes forth wherever he is led, to "extend the bounds of the kingdom." Whoever does this loyally to his lord does nothing wrong!

Every German professor is proud to wear "the King's coat." When he does not wear that, he is proud to wear the Order of the Red Eagle—the Black Eagle is usually too much to hope for—third



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or fourth class. Not to become a Geheimrat is to live a wasted life. And this is not wholly a matter of vanity. It is social status. It is more than that; it is a baptism, a chrism, in a holy service, the service of the Emperor, who is a king by "divine right." Not that every German professor really believes in "divine right"; for, logically, that would imply the existence of a divinity, in whom frequently he does not believe. To him the expression means that the Kaiser is divinely right, because he symbolizes the might of Germany. To be a conscious part of this higher system, a privy councilor, is to attain a great height; but to be a "Wirklicher Geheimrat," with the attribute of "Excellency," that is to reach the highest pinnacle of earthly honor attainable by a German professor.

In private many Germans would, no doubt, be disposed to smile over the strange conception of values implied in this passion for decorations; but no one would dispute the fact that the expectation of imperial recognition exerts a powerful influence over the German mind. It would, no doubt, be unjust to say that these honors work the miracle of making otherwise democratic minds imperialistic. The more exact statement would be, that, to minds already bred to imperialism, these honors have a value which to others they could never seem to possess, and are on that account an important means of extending the influence which the Kaiser is able to exert over thought and its expression by the learned world.

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Where affirmative support cannot be obtained open opposition must at least be silenced; and hence the control and subjection of the German press and news agencies. A perfectly free press would speedily undermine this system, and it cannot therefore be tolerated. Above all, no strictures must be made upon the Kaiser's authority; and, as personal respect is the ultimate basis upon which it rests, all public criticism of the Kaiser's words or conduct is regarded as *lèse-majesté*—a crime whose gravity seems to be augmented by the weight of the German name, *Majestätsbeleidigung*,—to be severely punished even in its mildest forms.

Personally, the Kaiser sees no value in public opinion as an independent personal state of mind. The proper substitute for it is imperial instruction followed by strict obedience. In private conversation, and even in public addresses, he does not hesitate to express his bitter antipathy to the whole pestilent tribe of editors and journalists. Even those who are under government influence and in government pay hardly command his consideration. They are regarded as mere hirelings, and are not invited to court. Armed with power to suppress all hostile publications—a power frequently exercised upon such periodicals as Harden's *Die Zukunft*, the Social-Democratic *Vorwärts*, and others far less radical—the Kaiser's government takes pains to see that his own views are authoritatively expressed in officially dictated articles furnished to the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*

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and other inspired publications, which sometimes have a lively experience in their endeavors to inculcate a safe political orthodoxy and to explain such unguarded conduct and expressions of His Majesty as the bureaucracy finds it expedient in the Kaiser's own interest to interpret or disavow.

Believing that the only legitimate function of a German newspaper is to increase the prestige of the Emperor, William II, at times finding that duty, as he thinks, neglected, himself gratuitously supplies the deficiency in public speeches and open telegrams. Quite in the manner of American statesmen, he has occasionally availed himself of the good offices of the "interview"; sometimes, however, with disastrous results to his reputation for discretion. Even in Germany it has occasionally been doubted if the chief function of the press is to extol the Emperor and his system, but such dissent does not augment the list of privy counselors.

Quite naturally, the attitude of the Kaiser toward the press is manifested also toward all other organs of public opinion. He has always been particularly hostile to the whole idea of political parties. His condemnation of the Social Democrats is, of course, unqualified, since the aim of their existence as a party is to control public policies, and even to take them entirely out of the Kaiser's hands. But he is, in fact, opposed to all parties, irrespective of their objects; for, however organized and whatever its aims, a political party

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exists for the purpose of making effective the views of its own members. When many parties exist, there is of necessity a division, and a consequent weakening, of the national force. What William II desires is the total abolition of political parties and unrestricted direction of the Empire by himself. In technical matters he is willing to accept advice from experts and specialists, but he claims as his own right the shaping of all general policies without counsel or obstruction of any kind.

At the very commencement of his reign William II openly declared his position on this subject and endeavored to impress it upon the nation. The German people, he announced, constitute one great family, of which their sovereign is the father. Nothing can be more lamentable than family disputes, which can be avoided only when the head, the sovereign, decides every question. "It is one of the great merits of my ancestors," he said to the deputies of Brandenburg, on February 20, 1891, "that they have never belonged to a party, that they have always been above all parties, and that they have succeeded in making them work together for the common good." Even before this he had said at Königsberg: "The King of Prussia is high above all parties, above the manœuvres and hates of politicians. . . . I know very well what you need, and I have ordered my conduct accordingly." But it is not only as King of Prussia, it is as Emperor, that William II considers himself above all parties. In 1899, at Hamburg, speaking of the

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needs of national unity of action, he said: "This sentiment spreads but slowly among the German people, who, unfortunately, spend their forces too freely in party conflicts. It is with profound disquietude that I have observed what slow progress is made in Germany by interest in the great questions which stir the world, and in the comprehension of them. . . . It requires from me and from my government strenuous efforts, which can prove successful only if the Germans are all behind us, renouncing the divisions of party."

Already, in 1899, the Kaiser had left far behind him the constitutional idea of a German "presidency," and insisted upon applying in the entire Empire the patriarchal tradition of the Kings of Prussia. A year later, in 1900, responding to a toast of Prince Ruprecht of Bavaria, at Wilhelms-haven, on the occasion of the launching of the *Wittelsbach*, the Kaiser showed that he did not fear publicly to proclaim his supreme authority over the entire Empire and its destiny, even in the presence of a royal representative of the second greatest state in the confederation. "Your Royal Highness," he said, "has been able to see with what force the waves of the ocean come to knock at the doors of our country and force us to take our place as a great people in the world; in a word, to enter into world politics. The ocean is indispensable to the greatness of Germany. But the ocean proves also that on its billows, and beyond it, nothing great can be decided without Germany and without the

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German Emperor. I do not believe that our German people have conquered, and have shed their blood under the conduct of their princes, thirty years ago, to be left aside in great international decisions. If that should happen, once for all the position of the German Empire in the world would be done for, and I am not disposed to let that occur. To use in this sense without hesitation the means most appropriate, and, if necessary, the most energetic, is my duty and my high prerogative." In the execution of that task, he added, he expected the princes and the German people to be behind him; but there was no intimation that his "prerogative" would be determined by their will. His divine authorization was as clear to him for the Empire as it was for his kingdom of Prussia. Of the constitution he made no mention. It is doubtful if it was even in his mind.

That the German Empire had anything to do with "the empire of the sea," of which the Kaiser spoke with confidence, as if it were a part of his divine right, few Germans were originally disposed to believe. When he first began to exploit this idea of sea-power, some considered it an adventurous fancy that might involve Germany in serious international complications, while others received it with indifference. Germans had, in general, no expectation of ever becoming, by nature of their country, a great sea-power. To the life and use of the sea only a few of them were accustomed. The sea-coasts were narrow and secluded from the



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great waters. Much labor and expense were necessary to give them safe and ample harbors. The recent acquisition of Schleswig-Holstein made possible to them the Kiel Canal, and the purchase of Helgoland from England gave them a strong marine fortification; but even with these it was felt that they were at a great disadvantage as a sea-power. Without the urgency of William II, it is doubtful if Bavarians, Saxons, and Würtembergers would ever have become aware of a close community between themselves and the seafaring interests of Hamburg, Bremen, and Lübeck.

To effect this awakening the Kaiser had first to Prussianize commerce, industry, and finance. This was not difficult. Prussia had learned the secret of effective organization. The army in all its many branches was a unit, and subject to one command. All Germans were soldiers. The task involved nothing but the transfer of the military system, with its unity, correlation, discipline, and obedience, into the affairs of civil life—the railways, the mines, the factories, the banks, and the mercantile marine.

The Kaiser made himself the patron of organized industrial and commercial life. "My principle is," he said at Brunsbüttel, in 1899, "to find everywhere new points of departure for our activity. . . . With a German, a spark has always ignited the fire of an idea; everything will soon be aflame."

Industry demanded commerce, commerce a

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mercantile marine, a mercantile marine a navy, a navy coaling-stations; and colonies alone, the Kaiser thought, could furnish a firm and secure basis for this world-wide development of German power.

Such an intrusion into the sphere of world relations by a great power—already the greatest military force in the world—would, of course, excite apprehension. The spark was struck and the fire was kindled, but it threw a new light on the whole problem of world relations.

No one had ever interfered with peaceful German commerce, even after the world was deeply penetrated by German industry; but the Kaiser had plans which he believed would be resisted. "You know that our industry," he said at Crefeld, in 1902, "in spite of all our labor, can prosper only on condition that a sovereign sufficiently powerful maintains the peace of the world." Since the formation of the Empire, he went on to declare, the force had been created which permits Europe to work tranquilly and in peace. The army could protect the German frontiers. "But you, a commercial city, well understand that, besides the army, something else is necessary: it is our fleet. . . . A fleet is necessary in order that you may everywhere tranquilly sell your products!"

It was not a question of coast defenses; it was not a question of the freedom of the sea—no one disputed that—for all ports were open to German traders and all waters were safe for German ships. But peaceful commerce under the police protection



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of a limited navy was not what the Kaiser had in mind. The purpose of William II was to carry militarism beyond the frontiers of the German Empire, and through it eventually to win for Germany "the empire of the sea."

To the Kaiser "the empire of the sea" meant colonies and coaling-stations in every part of the world, to be acquired through superior power on the sea. On January 1, 1900, he said: "What my grandfather did for the army on land that is what I shall do for the navy; without permitting myself to be troubled, I shall accomplish the work of reorganization, in order that it may hold the same rank as my land forces, and that, thanks to it, the German Empire can take the place in the world that it does not yet occupy. By means of the two armies, land and sea, I hope to be able, with the aid of God, to realize the saying of Frederick William I, 'When one wishes to decide anything in this world, the pen is not sufficient, if it is not supported by the force of the sword.' "

In view of the whole history of colonization by the states of Europe, and the imperial pretensions that had sometimes been made by them regarding remote portions of the earth, the desire of the Kaiser to see his people equally fortunate was not unnatural. Unquestionably, they had come to be heartily in sympathy with him in this regard, and were disposed to support his plans of naval and colonial expansion. Thus the industrial and commercial magnates who at first were inclined toward

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liberalism in government, flattered by the personal attentions which the Kaiser bestowed upon them, and stimulated by the prospect of increased rewards held out by his policy of expansion, were converted into ardent imperialists, eager to form an alliance with the military party of the Empire for the realization of a Greater Germany. As for the great landed proprietors who constitute the nobility of the country, while less interested than the commercial class in oversea development, they, by all the instincts and necessities of their caste, were bound to the chariot-wheel of the Emperor, without whom their whole fabric of feudal survivals would be swept away. While they looked down upon the navy as a plebeian upstart, born of the vulgar necessities of trade, the army offered to their sons the only great profession open to gentlemen in a country where politics had been mechanized into bureaucracy and the clergy were customarily drawn from the peasant and bourgeois classes. Diplomacy and high administrative office were for the small nobility the only available supplements to the army, and the almost exclusive appropriation of these functions by this caste was dependent upon the maintenance of the imperial system. The divine right of the hereditary landowners to these positions was closely bound up with the divine right of royalty, which therefore had to be sustained. To imperialism the only ultimate alternative was democracy; but, for the Junker, democracy meant extinction.

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And so it happened that the power inherited by the Kaiser in 1888 had by 1904 been so skilfully exercised as to weave into one solid fabric all the threads of German self-interest, until one by one the tribal spirit of the old principalities, through the exigencies of a new age, had merged them into the wider and more compact tribalism of the new German Empire.

The German people, thus compacted, had at this time attained not only to great industrial prosperity, such as no German state had ever known, but to a dangerous self-consciousness of imperial strength. The Navy League and the Colonial party, inspired by the Kaiser, were carrying on a strenuous propaganda for world dominion, backed by a marvelous growth of popular Pan-German sentiment, the result in large measure of the activities of the *Alldeutscher Verband*.

In June, 1904, King Edward VII had come to Kiel to attend the regatta, accompanied by a squadron of British battle-ships, which were saluted by the German fleet at anchor in the harbor. Together the two navies were able to form a splendid oceanic police force to protect the commerce of both nations. Nothing was wanting but an agreement between the two countries to insure to each other, and to all other maritime powers, equal commercial rights upon the sea.

At the gala dinner the Kaiser said to his royal guest: "Your Majesty has been welcomed by the thunder of German guns. It is the youngest navy

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in the world, and an evidence of the growing importance upon the sea of the German Empire, re-created by my grandfather. It is designed to protect its commerce and its territory, and it serves, like the German army, for the maintenance of peace.”

What a superb opportunity for cementing a good understanding with Great Britain! Was King Edward in a mood for this? We have the Kaiser's own testimony on this subject, for in the course of the meeting William II telegraphed to Nicholas II:

“Uncle Albert's visit going, of course, well. He is very lively and active and most kind. His wish for peace is quite pronounced, and is the motive for his liking to offer his services wherever he sees collisions in the world.”<sup>1</sup>

But what was the Kaiser's own attitude? Was he offering his services to avoid future collisions? He was, as usual, prompt in declaring his peaceful intentions; in fact, he seemed altogether to protest too much. Was German commerce or German territory likely to be anywhere attacked? If so, why did he not join with “Uncle Albert” in an endeavor to avoid collisions? The British and German

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<sup>1</sup> Bernstein, *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, New York, 1918, p. 47. This interesting little volume, reprinted from the private correspondence of the late Czar of Russia, Nicholas II, with William II, with a “Foreword” by ex-President Roosevelt, is of capital importance. It throws new searching light upon the secret plans of the Kaiser, while to the world at large he was making professions which are placed in contrast in the pages immediately following. A critical examination of the text confirms its authenticity.

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navies united could command peace everywhere on the ocean.

There is no evidence in the available records of this period to indicate on the part of the Kaiser either a disposition to arrange for avoiding future collisions or of a complaint to "Uncle Albert" that Great Britain was in any way menacing German rights on the sea; yet, on September 6th, at a great dinner at Hamburg, the Kaiser announced, "The German Empire has the right to have the army and the fleet of which it has need to defend its interests, and no one shall prevent it from organizing them as it pleases!"

Who, then, was disputing the right of the German Empire to have the army and navy it thought necessary to defend its "interests"? If those interests were the safety of its shores and the privileges of its commerce, no one was disputing them. Yet the Kaiser was representing to his people that some one was trying to prevent Germany from organizing its navy as it pleased. It could not at that time have been Russia, then engaged in war with Japan; for, on October 8th, the Kaiser was saying to the Czar, "I think it would be practical for you to begin ordering a line of battle-ships to be built, with private firms, as the Japanese have done in England, so that when in a year or two the negotiations for peace begin you can dispose of a fresh reserve to impose your will and make yourself independent of foreign intervention."<sup>1</sup> It

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<sup>1</sup> *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, p. 59.

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could not be Japan, for he then expected the strength of Japanese sea-power to be shattered by the victorious success of the Baltic fleet of Russia. It could not be the United States, for in his melodramatic fashion he telegraphed, on November 19th, to President Roosevelt:

“The friendship of Germany and the United States, of which Frederick the Great laid the first stone, rests on an unshakable granite foundation.”<sup>1</sup>

Was it, then, “Uncle Albert,” of whose passion for avoiding collisions, and of whose pronounced wish for peace, he had so lately testified, of whom the Kaiser was thinking?

We have positive evidence that, notwithstanding his own pacific protestations and the peaceful disposition of “Uncle Albert,” it was precisely Great Britain which was the power he had in mind as the obstructor of German oversea projects. As Great Britain certainly had no designs on German territory, and was not interfering with German commerce—the Kaiser made no complaints upon these points—the “interests” the Kaiser was anxious to “defend” were other than these. What, then, were those interests?

Every German and every Englishman understood what “interests” William II had in mind. He had made it evident in his public speeches. The Pan-German writers had indicated it on their maps—in Asia, in Africa, and in America. The aim of

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<sup>1</sup> Arren, *Guillaume II*, p. 279.



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the great increase in the German navy was to convince Great Britain and other maritime powers that it would not be wise to obstruct the colonial expansion of the German Empire by the protection of the weak nations from which new colonies were to be taken.

Now that Russia was rendered temporarily powerless by her war with Japan, the opportunity was presented for Germany, as it seemed to William II, to gain more by an arrangement with Nicholas II than by taking immediate advantage of his distress. Accordingly, behind the scenes William II, through secret correspondence with the Czar, which the accidents of the present war have revealed, was urging Nicholas II to pursue what promised to be a ruinous war between Russia and Japan, and in the mean time availing himself of an opportunity to isolate Great Britain by creating a secret alliance between Germany and Russia, into which France was to be artfully drawn, as a preliminary to his own maritime expansion. Great Britain isolated, Russia weakened in the war with Japan and bound to Germany by ties of obligation and a secret treaty, France would be secure in the imperial net; for, as the Kaiser boldly stated to the Czar, although Delcassé was termed by him an "*anglophile enragé*," he would "be wise enough to understand that the British fleet is utterly unable to save Paris!" And withal what a fine stroke of business! "Do not forget to order new ships of the line also, so as to be ready with some of them when

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war is over. They will be excellent 'persuaders' during the peace negotiations. Our private firms would be most glad to receive contracts!"<sup>1</sup>

Precipitately, like a hypnotic subject, Nicholas II fell into the trap. The new treaty was already fully prepared by William II. Once signed, France, it appeared, in order to retain her only ally, would be bound to sign it also. To the Czar it seemed to mean, as had been suggested by the tempter, "peace and rest for the world." But in November the conscience of Nicholas II hesitated. Ought not France to know of the compact that was to secure this peace and rest? "A previous information of France," the Kaiser urges, "will lead to a catastrophe. . . . It would be absolutely dangerous to inform France before we have both signed the treaty." In December William II becomes solicitous. The Russian need of coal for ships, which Germany as a neutral could not supply in accordance with international law, became an occasion for urgency.

"Serious news has reached me," writes the Kaiser; "there is now no time to be lost any more. No third power must hear even a whisper about our intentions before we have concluded the convention about the coaling business."<sup>2</sup>

Nicholas II was complaisant; but the coaling convention, whatever it was, appears to have profited him little. Insistence that France was leaving

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<sup>1</sup> *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, pp. 69, 70.

<sup>2</sup> The same, p. 90.



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him in the lurch, while Germany was his only true and loyal friend, seems to have overcome his scruples about not informing his ally; and, on July 23, 1905, at a meeting secretly arranged to appear as a merely casual encounter, the treaty of alliance was signed at Björkö, without the presence of ministers on either side.

Personal diplomacy had reached its zenith.

But what had "William the Peacemaker" done for the benefit of Nicholas II or the cause of universal peace? Having repudiated the Russian proposal for the limitation of armaments, and the Anglo-American plans for an international tribunal of justice, at the first Hague Conference, the Kaiser had never once proposed any plan for maintaining peace, except the supremacy of German armed force. During the whole of the Russo-Japanese War he had exercised no influence upon the plastic mind of the Czar, except to urge him to war and to fire him with displeasure toward England and suspicion of France.

Missing every chance to be a peacemaker, Kaiser William was using every secret means of fanning the flames of war. To Nicholas II he intimated that the suggestion of mediation between Russia and Japan seemed to leave a trail "that led across the Channel," as if mediation for peace were a crime to be tracked to its lair. With better information the Czar replied, "across the Channel or, perhaps, the Atlantic";<sup>1</sup> and, in February, 1905,

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<sup>1</sup> *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, pp. 62, 67.

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the American ambassador at St. Petersburg presented an offer of mediation by the President of the United States. It was not, however, until months afterward, when the preliminaries of peace had been agreed upon, that the Kaiser said of President Roosevelt's efforts: "I hear he has made nearly superhuman efforts to induce Japan to give way. He has really done a great work for your country and the whole world."<sup>1</sup> But even then he could not resist the impulse to intimate that "England had not budged a finger to help him." What, then, had the Kaiser himself done to help?

And what was he saying to the world during all these secret intrigues with the Czar?

On March 22, 1905, while he was still awaiting the signature of the secret treaty for the isolation of England, in his address at Bremen—the famous "We are the salt of the earth" speech, at the unveiling of the monument to Frederick III—the vision of a "worthy" Germany seemed to spread out before him, the tone of aggression was wholly suppressed, and the note of a "golden peace" was sounded, in which Bremen, as he expressed it, might "grow green, bloom, and prosper."

Was it the memory of Frederick the Noble that on this solemn occasion touched his deeper springs of sentiment, and recalled him for a moment to those eternal verities which ambition had obscured?

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<sup>1</sup> *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, pp. 128, 129.

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“I have made a vow,” he confided to his world audience, “as a result of what I have learned from history, never to strive for an empty world dominion. For what has become of the so-called world-empires? . . . The world-empire of which I have dreamed shall consist in this, that the newly created German Empire shall first of all enjoy on all sides the most absolute confidence as a quiet, honorable, and peaceful neighbor; and that, if in the future they shall read in history of a world-empire of a Hohenzollern world-ruler, it shall not be founded upon acquisitions won with the sword, but upon the mutual trust of the nations who are striving for the same goals.”

Here is pictured what Germany might have been if Frederick III had lived to direct the energies of the German nation. But was it really for this that William II had built his navy, and upon so many occasions exhorted Germans to strive for the mastery of the sea? Was it true that he had steadily gathered into his own grasp all the potencies of the German people in order, from the height of his throne, in a critical moment, to cast the die for a regenerated world and go down in history as “William the Peacemaker”?

Listening to his Bremen speech, there were many who looked with gratitude and hope to the future influence of William II.

“To develop steadily; to shun strife, hate, and jealousy; to rejoice in the German Fatherland as it is, and not to strive for the impossible”—these

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were the noble words with which in that speech the Kaiser described the task he had set for the German people. What a glorious mission, if this were true! How superbly he could render his final account to God, if this were really the secret inspiration of his life!

But, if this was the expression of his inmost desire, why, on July 23d, just four months afterward, did he conclude the secret treaty with Nicholas II, for the purpose of isolating Great Britain, which he was at this very time negotiating? Why isolate a power that could, together with Germany, secure peace throughout the world, at a time when the King of England was ready to "offer his services wherever he sees collisions in the world"?

Did William II in this Bremen speech describe the Germany he really desired, or was he merely staging a new scene in the drama, by presenting the picture of a Germany which all the world might respect and trust implicitly, while he was plotting in secret to control Russia through his influence upon Nicholas II, bring France into vassalage through the agency of her only ally, and leave Great Britain to watch in her "splendid isolation" the progress of Germany to that world-empire, of which even then, while Germania in white robes was chanting hymns of peace in the middle of the stage, Kaiser William had never for a moment ceased to dream?

## CHAPTER III

### THE KAISER AS A STAGE-MANAGER

WITHOUT question, Kaiser William II is the most histrionic sovereign of his time, and perhaps of any time. As a boy in school at Cassel, he was fond of amateur acting and sketched a scenario and *dramatis personæ* of a play in which Charlemagne was the principal character. The instinct to set the stage has been manifested in every period of his life. He has not only collaborated in the writing of plays; he has superintended the rehearsal of them on the stage, and is fond of organizing historic ballets. In the larger field of scenic impression which only a monarch can command, he has displayed the same talent for dramatic effect. Not only has he patronized the theater, but he has affirmed the value of it to him as a sovereign. "Yes," he once stated in public, "the theater is also one of my weapons. . . . It is the duty of a monarch to occupy himself with the theater, because it may become in his hands an incalculable force."

Among the Kaiser's rules, one is that no Hohenzollern may be represented on the stage without the Emperor's express permission, and he must be pre-

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viously given an opportunity personally to revise the part. Nothing political can be permitted to be introduced. Joseph Lauff's "Frederick of the Iron Tooth," dealing with a revolt against an Elector of Brandenburg, was thus revised; and Leoncavallo was invited to write an opera upon it, "Der Roland von Berlin"; but the Kaiser personally cut out the story of the woman who figured as Frederick's mistress, and wrote in the margin of the manuscript, "A courtesan has no place in a Hohenzollern drama."<sup>1</sup>

He has even attempted to rescue the reputation of the half-mythical kings of antiquity, apparently for no other reason than to maintain the dignity of the royal caste. The Greeks and Lord Byron had represented Sardanapalus, the Assyrian king, as the most effeminate and debauched monarch that ever existed; but the Kaiser, at the expense of two hundred thousand marks, with the help of the Assyriologists, in an opera of great magnificence has restored him to respectability as a brave sovereign who could face a heroic death rather than yield to his enemies. The effort was incidentally a fine tribute to scholarship as well as to kingship, but it was not so great an artistic success as the Emperor had expected. "You can't dramatize a museum," a Berlin critic had the courage to say, and the public joined in confirming the judgment.

It is convenient for a monarch, claiming to rule by divine right, to possess a gift for histrionic ac-

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<sup>1</sup> Shaw, *William of Germany*, London, 1913, p. 234.



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tion. Not being able by any current system of philosophic thought to establish the thesis of a right to rule by special divine authority, such a claimant must resort to other means. This pretension being merely a dogma incapable of proof, it belongs to the realm of faith rather than of knowledge. To induce faith in it, or assent to it, signs, symbols, and, above all, the practical advantages of the doctrine to the believer, must be employed. In brief, whoever makes this claim must play the part it implies successfully, or he is lost. As a claimant of divine right a plain person in civilian clothes, and crowned by a silk hat, could hardly hope to have a following, even among a superstitious people.

There is no evidence that as a young prince William II was especially pious or exceptionally devoted to the offices of religion; but he understood, as Frederick the Great, although personally a disciple of Voltaire, understood, that there was in the German people a deep undercurrent of religious feeling which German princes had successfully utilized to increase their power and their estates.

In his first proclamations to his subjects the Kaiser did not set up the claim which he afterward made the foundation of his throne. The memory of the *Kulturkampf*, in which Bismarck had so deeply offended the Catholics of the Empire, was a sufficient reason for not too much accentuating questions of religion at a time when the new Emperor was gaining his foothold. It was not until these wounds had at least partly healed, and Bis-

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marck had been disposed of, that the claim was positively asserted in the Emperor's speeches; for Bismarck considered the expression *von Gottes Gnaden* to mean "by the grace of divine permission," not "by the grace of divine appointment." He had had too much to do with maintaining the Prussian throne and establishing the Empire to accept any form of mysticism in connection with either.

The Kaiser's first enunciation that even remotely savored of the full-blown dogma was in March, 1890, at a meeting of the provincial diet of Brandenburg, where he spoke simply of "a talent intrusted to me by God, which it is my task to increase." A year later, at Bremen, he said, "We, the Hohenzollerns, regard ourselves as appointed by God to govern and lead the people whom it is given us to rule." It was not, however, until 1895, at Königsberg, that he announced that his crown was "born with him," and that he would follow the same path as his ancestor, Frederick I, "who *of his own right* was sovereign prince in Prussia." Two years later, at Coblenz, he spoke of his "fearful responsibility to the Creator alone, from which no human being, no minister, no parliament, no people can release the prince."

So long as this presumption led practically to no oppressive act, the German people felt no impulse to challenge this apparently harmless obsession. German writers who have commented upon it have not taken it very seriously, and have been inclined



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to excuse it as an ebullition of sincere religious rapture, induced in great measure by the thrilling events of the War of 1870 and the sudden rise of the Empire, which had touched all imaginations and appeared to many pious minds as a direct divine intervention. If the Empire itself was a miracle, why should not the Emperor, who certainly had never been chosen by the people, be recognized as a part of it?

The Kaiser has always seemed to his people a sovereign over whom a special divine watchfulness was needed, and might, therefore, be graciously vouchsafed. Who could prove, or wish to prove, that his extraordinary spontaneity, his occasional Delphic ambiguity, and his extreme exaltation of will and purpose unfitted him to be a medium of supernatural influence? He has been so devoted to his task, so industrious, so versatile, so completely a symbol of the aspirations of the German people, that he has had only to play the rôle in order to create faith among his trustful subjects and to silence, upon nearly all occasions, the impulse to detraction. Other nations do not understand this. The impossibility lies in the fact that they are not Germans.

The Teutonic race may not possess so refined an esthetic sensibility as the Latin, but it has been peculiarly receptive to the symbolism of art. Here was an avenue to German faith which the Kaiser was quick to perceive and to utilize. Monuments in great numbers have marked his reign, the silent

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sentinels of national glory. Not only have his ancestors been thus memorialized, but he himself has been constantly brought home to every city, town, hamlet, and home in Germany. He has been painted as a Roman Emperor and as the war-god Mars. His life-size statue in marble forms part of the external decoration of the new portal of the cathedral of Metz, where he figures as a canonized saint. He and his House are glorified in windows of stained glass, and magnificent vases of porcelain are adorned with his portraits. Every German embassy throughout the world possesses a life-size representation of his well-known face and figure. Photography has made his features familiar in a hundred ways, until his image is stamped indelibly upon the memory of nearly the whole human race. He would be recognized if he passed by in any village, not only of Germany, but wherever the printing-press is known. This is no accident. The world wants to know what a sovereign by divine right is like.

One distinction which William II is said to have craved has been denied him. His grandfather, William I, had raised objections to the title "German Emperor" ("*Deutscher Kaiser*"), and wanted to be called "Emperor of Germany." To this Bismarck objected that it would involve a claim to non-Prussian territory, that the council had chosen the former title, and that the German sovereigns would, perhaps, not agree to a change; and, after

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some contention, but in a testy humor, the lesser title was accepted.

When William II became Emperor, it is said, he desired to magnify his office by the ceremony of a regular coronation, and in 1892 had a throne constructed for this purpose after antiquarian drawings made by Emile Döpler. There was to be ordered a reproduction of the crown of Charlemagne, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, who on Christmas Day, 800, had been crowned at Rome. The unwillingness of the federal princes to assent to a coronation is reported to have defeated the project; but it is claimed that a photograph is in existence in which the Kaiser is represented seated upon the throne, an ermine cloak over his shoulders, the imperial scepter and the globe in his hands, and a gilded imitation of the crown of Charlemagne in stucco on his head.<sup>1</sup>

But this is only the corollary of a far greater demonstration. Art, all art, in the Kaiser's opinion, is a valuable and appropriate vehicle of sovereign influence. History is wholly the work of princes. All that is great in the world emanates from them. Of his grandfather, William I, he has said: "God had destined him to realize the desire of all Germans and to give unity to Germany on the field of battle. For that work he was able to find great men who had the honor to execute his designs, and as his councilors to work with him." The whole of civilization is nothing but the result of

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<sup>1</sup> Nousanne, *The Kaiser as He Is*, New York, 1905, p. 173.

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such instruments of God, chosen to carry out the divine plan in human life. "Properly speaking," he says, "William I has become for us a saint." By inference, all Hohenzollerns are saints, or in process of becoming saints. All painters, sculptors, musicians, and architects have the duty of teaching this religion of imperial supremacy, revealed through their princes. "The cult of the ideal is the greatest work of civilization. . . . It can accomplish its task only with the aid of art." But what is the "ideal" in the Kaiser's mind? It is defined by him as "the inspiration which God sends to the artist," and the highest existing example of it is in the Siegesallee, which tells the story of the House of Hohenzollern.

Believing himself especially open to this form of inspiration, Kaiser William II has always considered himself a great critic of art, and, therefore, the most competent person to direct its development. Even in Germany, however, this conviction is not generally shared. Indeed, the Kaiser and the experts in art have seldom agreed; but in practice his judgment has usually triumphed.

Although artistic feeling is, perhaps, the most refractory and untamable of all the impulses to self-realization, artists, being human, have for obvious reasons been anxious to receive imperial approbation. But the artistic inspiration of Kaiser William is not always calculable.

The passion of the Kaiser for the grandiose is celebrated sumptuously in Berlin. What it might

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lead to in time is, perhaps, only prefigured in the attempt to embody Prussian history in the vista of the Siegesallee, in the image of Germania on the top of the Siegessäule, and in the Gargantuan architecture of the Kurfürstendam. *Grossartig* and *kolossal* are the vocables that express the impression everywhere created.

In a long personal conversation, the substance of which it is no violation of confidence on my part to repeat, the Kaiser dwelt upon the value of "form" as a medium of public education. "Men think most often and most deeply," he said, "of what they have seen. To impress the eye is to take possession of the mind." It is a mode of conquest which the Kaiser has practised all his life.

In the large field of imperial development also art has had a great part to play. The time, the place, and the scenic accessories for dramatic effect, with the world for an audience, have been carefully chosen. The result, primarily calculated for Germany, has not always been precisely what was intended. At Damascus, for example, on November 8, 1898, during his journey in the East, William II took occasion to say how deeply moved he was "at standing on the spot where one of the most knightly sovereigns of all times, the great Sultan Saladin, had stood"; overlooking the fact that this "knightly sovereign" was a heartless murderer who had sacked Jerusalem and turned its holy places into mosques. Not content with this fulsome compliment to a fanatic of the past, the

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Kaiser next proceeded to offer the hand of perpetual friendship to the most notorious criminal of the age, the Sultan Abdul-Hamid, and "the three hundred million Mohammedans scattered over the earth who venerate him as their caliph." While at home the words were passed over lightly as an excusable means of preparing the Mohammedan mind for the favorable reception of German commercial penetration and control, even in Germany the performance evoked smiles among those who knew that the Kaiser was astray by a hundred million of the population in his estimate of his Oriental friends, and that it was precisely Saladin who had struck Christendom its most fatal blow by the capture of the Holy City; while to other nations this adulation was a clear premonition of the exclusive Oriental policy on the part of Germany that has culminated in a world war.

Under ordinary circumstances, the Kaiser finds it easy to play the rôle of apparent omniscience, because he can summon to his side for his information on any subject the most learned specialists in the Empire, who are always eager to enjoy this distinction. Having utilized this advantage to an extraordinary degree, he is, undoubtedly, in matters in which he is interested, as far as German knowledge extends and German prejudice permits, one of the best-informed persons in the world. For all his important audiences and utterances he carefully prepares. He speaks with American exchange professors with a fullness of knowledge of their



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subjects that frequently surprises them. Nothing gives him greater pleasure than to exploit in conversation with his guest some new discovery just learned of from a German professor, or from a military or naval officer. Sometimes, however, his informant has been wrongly selected or has misunderstood the theme; as when, for example, the Emperor delivered a rather technical discourse to a supposed expert in the science of seismology, only to learn that his visitor was a geographer.

Within the limits of his knowledge, which is wide, and served by an excellent memory, the Kaiser's mind is extremely alert and active, prone to resort to and to evoke repartee. He is seldom caught napping, for his position gives him every advantage, and his courtiers are disposed to leave him the victor in every encounter of wit, and even in every serious controversy. Except by Americans, he is seldom frankly dealt with; and his interest in them, when it is not for purely political purposes, arises largely from his real interest in the freedom with which they are accustomed to express themselves.

The legend of the Kaiser's "spontaneity" has caused to be ascribed to him some indiscretions which were not original with himself. Such, for example, was the celebrated "Kruger telegram" of January 3, 1896. It is now well established that this was not an impulsive and personal performance. It was so strictly official that the text of it was prepared in the Foreign Office and brought ready for signature to the Chancellor's palace by



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the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, the Kaiser having been summoned to Berlin from Potsdam to approve it.<sup>1</sup> He at first demurred, but at last permitted himself to be persuaded; and Herr von Holstein, who was waiting for the result in the anteroom, has testified to the jubilation of the Secretary as he came from the presence of His Majesty waving in triumph the paper to which the Kaiser had just appended his signature. The telegram was generally interpreted as a purely personal message of congratulation to President Kruger that he had defeated the Jameson raid "without calling on the help of foreign powers"; thereby conveying the intimation of willingness on the part of the Kaiser to intervene if it had been necessary. Not unnaturally the British government, considering it as a menace that might be followed by action, as an answer put a flying squadron in immediate commission and made an official announcement that, by a convention of 1884, the foreign relations of the Transvaal had been placed under the supervision of the British Foreign Office. As nothing further happened, the Kaiser for many years bore in silence the odium of this unwise suggestion of German intervention. It was just that he should do so, for by his own theory of government there is no definite distinction between his

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<sup>1</sup> The text of the Kruger telegram is as follows:

"I express to you my sincere congratulations that, without appealing to the help of friendly powers, you and your people have succeeded in repelling the armed bands which had broken into your country and in maintaining the independence of your country with your own forces against foreign aggression."

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personal and his official acts. Being responsible to no one, a sovereign by divine right can never be expected to apologize or explain. To do either would be a confession of his own accountability. An absolute ruler can punish a councilor for giving him bad advice, but if he follows it the act cannot be regarded by him as an error. The king can do no wrong.

The attempt in any way to separate the personal and the official acts of the Kaiser is, therefore, purely academic. So long as William II's theory of his personal supremacy is not rejected, the Imperial German government, and even the whole German nation, are bound to assume responsibility to other powers for what the sovereign does or fails to do. It is the necessary consequence of submitting to absolute personal authority.

The speech made by William II at Tangier, on March 31, 1905, only nine days after the "We are the salt of the earth" proclamation at Bremen, was regarded throughout Europe as an open challenge to France, whose proposals of reform in Morocco the Sultan, Abdul-Aziz, was practically cautioned not to regard.

"It is to the Sultan," said the Kaiser, "in his position of an independent sovereign that I am paying my visit to-day. I hope that under the sovereignty of the Sultan a free Morocco will remain open to the peaceful rivalry of all nations, without monopoly or annexation, on the basis of absolute equality. The object of my visit to Tangier is to make it

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known that I am determined to do all that is in my power to safeguard efficaciously the interests of Germany in Morocco, for I look upon the Sultan as an absolutely independent sovereign.”

The news of the pronunciamiento was instantly flashed round the world, and for weeks all Europe was breathlessly awaiting what would happen next. Like the “Kruger telegram,” this fulmination was at first set down as one of the Kaiser’s personal indiscretions; but it soon became evident that it was the Foreign Office where the *mise en scène* of Germany’s new foreign policy had been conceived. Prestige in Europe was, undoubtedly, one of the objects to be obtained; but there was a still more important reason for declaring the “integrity” of Morocco. Kaiser William had promised the Mohammedans “scattered over the globe” that the German Emperor “will be their friend at all times.” “We should have completely destroyed our credit in the Mohammedan world,” said Von Bülow, “if so soon after this declaration we had sold Morocco to the French. Our ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, said to me at the time, ‘If we sacrifice Morocco in spite of Damascus and Tangier, we shall at one fell swoop lose our position in Turkey and therefore all advantages and prospects that we have painfully acquired by the labor of many years.’”<sup>1</sup>

Certainly, no more effective method of proclaiming an intention to intervene in the affairs of North

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<sup>1</sup> Von Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, London, etc., 1913 and 1916.

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Africa, where Germany was exposed to no danger and had no other than very limited commercial interests, could have been chosen. What shocked the chancelleries of Europe was that it was thought necessary thus publicly to strike France a blow in the face. It seemed like the opening of an entirely new school of diplomacy, in which the mailed fist was to take the place of argument.

From a less strident declaimer than William II the same acts might not have been subject to the same interpretation; but, notwithstanding professions of peace, he was constantly justifying the imputation of aggressive purposes by his utterances at home. At the gala dinner attending the unveiling of the statue of Moltke, for example, a short time after the speech at Tangier, the Kaiser introduced his toast by crying out, "We have seen, gentlemen, in what a position we are placed with reference to the rest of the world: in consequence, hurrah for the powder dry and the sword sharpened, for the recognized purpose and our forces ever on the alert, for the German army and the General Staff!"

It is true that there had been in 1904 an agreement between Great Britain and France, whereby Great Britain was not to be interfered with by France in safeguarding her interests in Egypt, and France was to be free to demand reforms in her near neighbor, Morocco; but the commercial interests of Germany were in neither case denied or affected. The attitude of Germany was expressed

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in the speech from the throne of November, 1905. "The difficulties which have arisen between France and us, apropos of the Morocco affair," said the Kaiser, "have no other origin than a tendency to regulate without our collaboration questions where the German Empire has interests to defend."

In claiming equal commercial privileges in an independent country awaiting future development, the position of Germany was entirely reasonable; but it was the first time the saber had been publicly rattled and a virtual threat of war uttered by a great power in the face of friendly nations for such a cause. "The signs of the times," the Kaiser declared in his speech from the throne, "make it a duty to the German people to reinforce their defenses against all aggression."

A different temper might have secured to Germany, without disturbance, every right, in so far as her interests could be made to appear; but the purpose of William II was not so much to maintain German interests in Morocco, which at most were inconsiderable, as to assert, in a manner to force recognition, the dominant position of Germany as a world power that had always to be reckoned with in every question. To force this admission, the demand was made that France should be summoned before a European Conference—a tribunal before which the Kaiser has since systematically held that no nation could honorably be compelled to appear.

For a time it seemed as if the boast of Berlin were well founded. M. Delcassé, who had negoti-

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ated the arrangement with Great Britain, was forced out of office, while Von Bülow was created a Prince. Diplomatically, the calling of the Conference of Algeciras, in 1906, at first appeared to be a triumph for Germany; but in the end proved the virtual isolation of the German Empire, except for the loyal adherence of Austria-Hungary, which won the distinction of a "brilliant second." It served to reveal the ambition of Germany to dominate; but substantially it obtained for her nothing that could not have been secured by a reasoned exchange of notes—namely, the "open door" in Morocco, which was never denied. In its ultimate consequences, as a thinly veiled threat to France at the moment when Russia was impotent as an ally, German insistence threw the stress of future diplomatic intercourse upon armed force and rendered the problems of equity mere problems of power. It is, however, only in the light of later developments that the true significance of the Moroccan question can be accurately understood.

It immediately became evident that France would never permit herself, through a *rapprochement* between Russia and Germany, to be brought into vassalage to the Kaiser, as he had intended. The interest of William II in the secret treaty with Nicholas II, therefore, soon began to relax. The agreement the two Emperors had made, that the Kaiser, on his visit to Copenhagen, in July, 1905, should inform the King of Denmark that, in case of war with England, Germany and Russia would



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be obliged jointly to seize and occupy that kingdom, fell by the wayside; and the Kaiser informed the Czar, "I thought it better not to touch the subject with the Danes and refrained from making any allusions, as it is better to let the idea develop and ripen in their heads and to let them draw the final conclusions themselves, so that they will of their own accord be moved to lean upon us and fall in line with our two countries."<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, since Russia was losing in the Russo-Japanese War and threatened with domestic revolution, the Kaiser was not so eager to insist upon the alliance he had been laboring to impose upon Nicholas II. In fact, in the changed conditions, an alliance would, perhaps, be wholly undesirable; for it might, without a substantial equivalent, place Germany under obligations to a power unable even to save itself.

Just here we have, through recent disclosures, an interesting revelation of the Kaiser's real estimate of the divine right and responsibility of rulers. In August, 1905, William II was encouraging Nicholas II to accept parliamentary government for Russia. "I beg you," he writes, "to accept my warmest congratulations for this great step forward in the development of Russia." Not only so, but he explicitly advises the Czar to place the responsibility of the terms of peace upon the Duma! "I would in your place not miss this first and best opportunity," he continues, "to decide to get in

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<sup>1</sup> Bernstein, *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, New York, p. 119.



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close touch with your country's feelings and wishes about peace or war, giving the Russian people the long-wished-for opportunity to decide, or take part in the decision, relating to its future. . . . The decisions which are to be taken are so terribly earnest in their consequences and so far-reaching that it is quite impossible for any mortal sovereign to take the responsibility for them alone on his shoulders without the help of his people."<sup>1</sup>

Is this the spirit in which the Kaiser was ruling Germany, when he said, "You Germans have only one will, and that is my will; there is only one law, and that is my law"? Should the people's parliament bear "the odium of the decision" between peace and war, as the Kaiser proposed, and have nothing to say regarding secret treaties of alliance which might lead to war? Yet the Kaiser wishes the secret treaty to remain secret, although he attaches less importance to it than before. Still, with a change in the cards, it might prove useful. "We joined hands and signed before God, who heard our vows," he says. "I therefore think the treaty may well come into existence." Nevertheless, as bitterly as any democrat, he rails against the alleged secret diplomacy of "the arch mischief-maker of Europe in London," as he calls Edward VII, whom, he says, "the revelations of Delcassé" convict of "planning war against our friendly nation in peace." "Like brigands in a wood," he declares, he has sent the Russian ambassador to Copenhagen

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<sup>1</sup> *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, pp. 123, 124.

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on a clandestine mission, to induce the Czar's mother to influence him for a policy against Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Nicholas II, with the war off his hands and the Duma to "bear the odium" of the terms of peace—but only to be disbanded a short time afterward—was resuming his independence, defending his ambassador as grossly misunderstood, and thinking lightly of the secret treaty. William II, on the other hand, having arrived at the conclusion that England, after all, was likely to be a more useful friend than Russia, while tightening the alliance with Austria-Hungary, who at the Conference of Algeciras had proved, "*la fidélité d'un allié sûr*," was soon staging a closer *entente* with Great Britain. On August 3, 1906, during the visit of Edward VII at Kiel, the Kaiser wrote to the Czar: "The maintenance of friendly relations between Germany and England is an absolute necessity for the world. I am pleased about this result of Uncle Bertie's visit." In less than a year, "the arch mischief-maker of Europe" had become the mainstay of peace. The meeting with Uncle Bertie at Wilhelms-höhe, in August, 1907, was also "satisfactory"; and the Kaiser recorded, "Uncle Bertie in good humor and peacefully disposed."<sup>2</sup> In November of that year William II returned the King of England's visit, and in his speech accepting the degree of Doctor of Civil Law conferred upon him by Ox-

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<sup>1</sup> *The Willy-Nicky Correspondence*, pp. 111, 131, 139.

<sup>2</sup> The same, pp. 152, 155.

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ford University, praised Cecil Rhodes—who had been reported to be the inspirer of the Jameson raid—for “the amplitude of his views” in founding scholarships at Oxford which “permitted young Germans to associate themselves with young Englishmen in studying the character and qualities of their respective nations.” Even the journalists were not neglected, and in a speech to them the Kaiser said: “We belong to the same race and to the same religion. These are bonds which ought to be strong enough to maintain harmony and friendship between us.” Wearing a British uniform and adorned with British academic honors, for the Kaiser there was now no need of the secret treaty with Russia.

Thus, within two years, and without other reason than the hope of increasing the power of Germany, William II had abandoned the Czar in the time of his weakness, after secretly conspiring with him to isolate Great Britain and attach France to a Russo-German alliance; and, failing in this, he had endeavored to form a close relation with Great Britain, in order to prevent an *entente* with France. We shall see how, a little later, unable even with these new professions of friendship for the “arch mischief-maker of Europe,” as he had called Edward VII, to prevent the growing good understanding with France, the Kaiser made most bitter accusations of hostility against Great Britain, merely because the King was endeavoring to be friendly with the Czar.

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It is, perhaps, an inevitable consequence of the system that has long prevailed in Europe that all general understandings are in danger of being rendered impossible by the assumption that friendship between a sovereign's friends signifies hostility toward himself. So long as the friendship of nations is based on the conception of offensive and defensive alliances, this assumption is a perfectly natural one. It runs through the entire history of European diplomacy. It is the foundation on which the whole theory of the balance of power rests. Too large an aggregate of mutually friendly nations has always created the suspicion of a conspiracy among them against the others, which then feel it necessary to find new friends, outside the combination, in order to hold the first group in check. As the aggregation broadens, isolation is believed to be complete, and the peril is felt to be unendurable. So long as secret diplomacy is practised these conditions may be expected to prevail.

It would be agreeable to find evidence that at any time since the beginning of his reign William II had in mind any plan, any principle, or any desire for a general understanding in Europe that would relieve the nations from dependence upon armed force for their safety.

The opportunity had been twice offered. In 1898, the Czar of Russia had proposed a limitation of armament. The German delegates to the first Hague Conference were instructed to take no part in discussing this subject, and it was promptly

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dropped from the program at Germany's instigation. The English and American delegates, supported by Russia and France, sought to establish international institutions that would enable nations disposed to act justly to solve at least some of their problems in a judicial manner. The history of that effort is well known. The German first delegate, Count Münster, dismissed the idea of arbitration as "humbug"; and the reason he gave for this opinion, as reported by the American first delegate, was that "Germany is prepared for war as no other country is; Germany can mobilize her army in ten days, a performance that could not be equaled by France or Russia or any other state. An arbitration court would, however, give an enemy time to make his preparations. Therefore it would only place Germany at a disadvantage."<sup>1</sup>

It was only after extraordinary efforts to induce the Emperor to see that this attitude, if persisted in, would cause him and his country to be distrusted, scorned, and hated by every civilized people, and especially by millions of the German race in America, that instructions were finally issued from Berlin to accept some kind of purely voluntary and occasional method of adjudicating international differences; but without the least promise to resort to it, even in the case of strictly legal questions.

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<sup>1</sup> See for the whole Conference, Andrew D. White's *Autobiography*, 2 vols., New York, 1905, and extracts in *Illustrative Document No. II.*

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The second Hague Conference offered another opportunity. It was treated in a different manner, but with almost the same result. Three eminent German jurists were sent as delegates. Their instructions have not been published, as those of the United States have been; but it was given out by them that, while the limitation of armaments, either on land or sea, could not even be considered, Germany was ready for arbitration and a court of international justice, and was prepared to work for them. This time, the Kaiser, although he had manifested no interest in this Conference, had set the stage for avoiding the error his delegates had made in the first.

It soon became evident, however, that while Germany, her allies, and her Balkan satellites were, "in principle," ingeniously professing to accept every great aim of peaceful international organization, they were blocking every practical proposal leading to a definitive result.

The method was very simple. Unlike the parliamentary bodies of a single nation, in which decisions are made by majorities, an international conference requires, because of the complete sovereignty of the separate states composing it, entire unanimity before any final result can be obtained. Playing several small powers as mere pawns upon a chess-board, the German first delegate was able, when he did not find it convenient himself to raise objection, to prevent unanimity by the objection of one of Germany's allies or benevolent colleagues.



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By those accustomed to trace the intricacies of negotiation, and who knew the affinities that were controlling this collusion, often quite perplexing, the procedure was from the beginning perfectly comprehended; and, months before the termination of the Conference, they were prepared to predict that, notwithstanding Baron Marschall von Bieberstein's bland and plausible assurances that Germany was eager for a court of arbitral justice, no such court would ever be brought to completion in that Conference.

Hardly credited at first, this prediction was extremely disappointing to the American delegation, which throughout toiled bravely on, in the hope that success might ultimately prove attainable.

Whispered from time to time, even by those delegates who sincerely wished for a good result, were the words, "Germany must not be isolated!" With the support Baron Marschall von Bieberstein was able to command, the danger of Germany's isolation was not so imminent as her nervous neighbors sometimes feared. If Germany were isolated, they knew what the Imperial wrath would be, and saw in such a *dénouement* the gathering of the storm; for, with the plans that were then in contemplation, Germany would not yield to the decisions of a European Areopagus. Baron Marschall von Bieberstein knew that there was no probability of Germany's isolation. To isolate Germany would be to defy Germany; and it was felt, even by the most ardent advocates of the judicial method of dealing



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with international controversies, that it was not the part of wisdom to permit a convocation called in the name of peace to become the occasion of provoking war.

As weeks and months slipped by, the intention of Germany became so evident that the American first delegate, the Honorable Joseph H. Choate, who had toiled like a giant in the cause of effective international justice based on law, had the courage, with greater regard for truth than for diplomatic precedent, to say of Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, the German first delegate, in a plenary session of the Conference, and in his presence: "Baron Marschall von Bieberstein is an ardent admirer of the abstract principle of arbitration and even of obligatory arbitration, and even of general arbitration between those he chooses to act with; but when it comes to putting this idea into concrete form and practical effect he appears as our most formidable adversary. He appears like one who worships a divine image in the sky, but when it touches the earth it loses all charm for him. He sees as in a dream a celestial apparition which excites his ardent devotion, but when he wakes and finds her by his side he turns to the wall and will have nothing to do with her."<sup>1</sup>

A few weeks after the adjournment of the Conference His Majesty the Kaiser visited Holland as the guest of the Queen. He spoke with fervor of

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<sup>1</sup> *Deuxième Conférence Internationale de la paix, Actes et Documents, Tome II, p. 72.*

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the relations between the Houses of Orange and Hohenzollern, recalled how the Great Elector had found his noble spouse in Holland, and wished the kingdom "prosperity in the midst of the benefits of peace"; but of the great work so recently undertaken there, for the peace of the whole world by representatives of all civilized nations—the only universal international congress that ever assembled—he had not one word to say.

To play the double rôle of William the War Lord and William the Peacemaker at the same time, even with such able support as the Kaiser believed himself to have in Count Münster, who was chosen for his "common sense," and Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who was chosen because in Oriental diplomacy he had out-Turked the Turk, exceeded the dramatic talent of even this prodigy in histrionic art. Beneath the flowing robe of the peacemaker the protruding scabbard of the sword has always trailed across the stage, and it has rattled loudest when the Kaiser has discoursed most vociferously of the German love of peace.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE KAISER UNDER FIRE

WHEN my official relations with Kaiser William II began he was just completing the twentieth year of his reign. He had attained to the prime of mature manhood, he had never suffered any serious reverse, and he was fully conscious of his unquestioned power.

Not only had there been during this long period no European war, but the general conditions in Europe were favorable for the organization of permanent peace. And yet, notwithstanding serious efforts, peace had not been organized. On the contrary, the efforts to organize it had terminated in the conclusion at The Hague of a series of general treaties nearly all of which were constructed in open anticipation of future war, being composed chiefly of rules intended, if possible, to render war only slightly less horrible than the growth of military science had made it evident that it probably would be.

There was, it is true, no reason inherent in the social order why war should then be regarded as inevitable; and the chief ground for believing it

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might occur was the evident unwillingness of certain powers to make the necessary provisions for averting it. If, in fact, it was inevitable, it was owing solely to ambitions that were not open to discussion.

At that time the German Empire had taken a place in Europe which made its action of the highest importance; for no international question could arise without suggesting the inquiry, "What will Germany do about it?" And the answer was complicated by the fact that Berlin was an enigma. All depended upon the uncertain mood of Kaiser William II.

How incalculable a factor the Kaiser really was the year 1908 was to reveal in an astonishing manner. Not only was it a critical time for the international relations of Europe, as the events will show, but a trying time for the theory of personal supremacy that underlies the conception William II had formed of his position as German Emperor. His pretensions, his purposes, his character, and his popularity among his own people were in that crucial period to be subjected to unexpected tests.

The second Hague Conference had brought into vivid contrast two conflicting conceptions of diplomacy that had there come into collision: on the one hand the secret, obstructive, and evasive procedure characteristic of personal sovereignty; on the other the open, constructive, and frankly avowed statement of purposes aimed at for the

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common good, advocated and practised by the great democracies.

The fact that the new American ambassador, who had received from the German Emperor his *agrément* in December, 1907, but was not actually transferred from The Hague to Berlin until June, 1908, had not only been a delegate to the second Hague Conference, but had for many years been closely identified with the movement represented there by the American delegation, did not add to the probability of his being *persona gratissima* at the Court of the Kaiser. It was, in fact, understood that the government of the United States intended to accomplish, if possible, by separate negotiation, what it had failed to achieve at The Hague. It was further known that the new ambassador, during the winter of 1908, had publicly advocated this policy; and that separate treaties were to be made, if possible, with each of the great powers, by which the ground would be prepared for a better international organization. It was, in fact, with special reference to his aiding in this task of separate negotiation at Berlin that the new ambassador had been selected.

This mission, it was evident, would not be so much an affair of ceremony as a sober undertaking, having in view the establishment of the future relations of the two countries upon a basis of mutual understanding and legal engagements, with provision for adjudicating through improved treaty arrangements future difficulties that might arise.

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There can be no doubt that many of the German people, as well as the American people, greatly desired such open and duly legalized relations, but this was not the Kaiser's personal conception of diplomacy. In such a system the personal element would be practically eliminated.

Nothing can be more certain than that William II earnestly desired to maintain friendship with the United States, but he did not wish the American system to gain a foothold in Europe, or that international relations should be made to rest upon a body of well-defined law and a tribunal with authority to interpret and apply it. Such a system would inevitably in time, if logically carried out, diminish the necessity for armies, and what would then become of the War Lord? If the people—manufacturers, ship-owners, and traders, doing business internationally—could carry their wrongs to a court of justice, it could not fail to affect the status of kings and emperors as well as of armies and navies.

What the Kaiser wanted of America was peace, trade, and neutrality so far as Europe was concerned. For these he looked largely to the racial loyalty of men of German blood living in the United States. With this support, war with Germany would always be difficult. Disputes, if they should arise, could be dealt with as occasion might require; but enlarged treaty arrangements were not, he thought, desirable. They would, perhaps, prove embarrassing to personal government; and if made

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with the United States, other nations would demand them and refusal would thereby be made more difficult.

It was perfectly natural for the Kaiser to take this view. It was a necessary corollary of his theory of personal government. For twenty years he had promoted amities, softened asperities, and kept Germany prosperous by a régime of personal visits to other sovereigns, personal telegrams of felicitation and condolence, secret correspondence, and casual words dropped into the ears of ambassadors at Berlin which he knew would be repeated to their sovereigns. A Europe based on public treaties, open, known of all men, would take all the charm out of a sovereign's existence. All the plot interest of diplomacy would be gone. Could anything be more inartistic than playing a part so commonplace as that of an emperor who had no secrets and in case of controversy would be required to assent to the decisions of a court?

To the Kaiser, as to most sovereigns before the constitutional era, the essential part of diplomacy is the quasi-social intimacy of kings. The chief function of ambassadors, upon this theory, is to bridge distances by creating a common court life, where personal influence can be made to count. An embassy, therefore, is from this point of view merely an extension of the court of the country it represents, and should be constituted and maintained for the performance of that function.

As between personal sovereigns, there is, no



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doubt, much to be said in support of this idea. The ambassador is the direct and authorized representative of his sovereign. He lives in his sovereign's house, receives his bread from his sovereign's hand, is his servitor, keeps his secrets, and concerns himself only with his sovereign's interests.

But the United States has no personal sovereign; and the Constitution provides for no personal representation of the President, who has no court and is supposed to have no court favorites. There being no power in a constitutional government to exchange secret understandings between the heads of states, such a nation must base its international relations on its treaty engagements; and these must be open, public, and sufficient to safeguard its interests, regardless of personal sentiments or personal influences. To such nations diplomacy means international business, a very serious and exacting business, upon the proper transaction of which the most important interests of a people, and even life itself, may depend.

However widely imperial purposes and republican conceptions of international relations and intercourse may differ, both sides must admit that between sovereign nations a basis of mutual understanding must be found. The amenities of life are not incompatible with the serious discussion of business, even where contradictory views are held. On the contrary, the wider the chasm of differences the more essential these amenities become.

When, therefore, on June 8, 1908, the new Ameri-

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can ambassador made his appearance at Berlin, it was with the conviction that, whatever the chances for the success of his mission, he would receive a cordial welcome; and in this he was not disappointed.

The provincial Prussian capital of other days had been in twenty years transformed into the most modern city of continental Europe, an impressive symbol of the wonderful material progress of the Empire. From a sleepy thoroughfare Unter den Linden had become a cosmopolitan bazaar with shops of unsurpassed brilliancy of self-disclosure, as if to challenge comparison with their rivals in older centers of merchandise. Of its new Hotel Adlon, in which all that could be learned of sumptuous hostelries from our most splendid American experiments had been embodied, the Kaiser, who had honored the opening with his presence, had condescended by way of encouragement to say, "*Es ist schöner als bei uns.*" The Wilhelmstrasse, which in one's student days had seemed so impenetrable and mysterious, now flung wide its doors of welcome to cheerful interiors, where the amiable Baron von Schön presided over the Foreign Office, and Prince von Bülow, affable, courtly, and always adjusted to the situation, however complicated, sat in the chair of Bismarck in the palace of the Chancellor.

Whatever may be said of the Kaiser's personal rule, the machinery of government is very much in evidence in Berlin. No Foreign Office in the world

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is better organized for obtaining information, influencing the press, or handling with expert knowledge every question affecting the political or economic interests of the Empire. When treaties are to be made, there are at hand all the knowledge and all the skill for making them prudently and to the advantage of Germany; and, in addition, all the agencies for the accumulation and presentation of obstacles to making them, when impediments are the order of the day. And when it is deemed desirable to fix a policy in the mind of the country, the Chancellor—especially Prince von Bülow, who was a past-master in the art of public statement—speaks *ex cathedra* with an authority hardly known elsewhere.

But concealed behind all this complicated apparatus of bureaus is the personality of the Kaiser. From the Chancellor down to the humblest assessor, all are obedient to his will when they know it. In order to know what you can or cannot do in Germany it is necessary to know the mind of William II.

It was with great interest, therefore, that the new ambassador looked forward to his first audience of His Majesty. He had not long to wait. With unprecedented promptness the notice came that on the Sunday morning following his arrival in the capital he would be received at the Old Palace in Berlin.

It seemed perfectly natural that the audience should occur in the open air, under the trees in the

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little garden of the *Schloss*. The seclusion and intimacy of such a meeting gave it a welcome character. The three flamboyant court carriages, each drawn by six horses, with bewigged drivers, postilions, and footmen clinging on behind, made a spectacle for the crowd that lined the way; but neither these nor the red-breeched lackeys that formed in open column on the grand staircase awakened the slightest interest. The seventeen volleys at the castle gate were hardly heard. All this was the old story, the stage trumpery that is supposed to enhance "the divinity that doth hedge a king," the commonplaces of every royal court.

Invited by the Grand Master of Ceremonies, the Emperor's ever-faithful servitor, Count Eulenberg, to descend alone an outer flight of steps into the garden, one was surprised to see, standing like a statue, perhaps twenty yards away, a solitary figure, clad in white, covered with a silver helmet bearing on its crest a high-poised eagle, adding considerably to the apparent height of a medium-sized man. Seen in the coulisses of an opera-house, this apparition might have been taken for Lohengrin waiting for his cue. It was the Kaiser in the brilliant uniform of an officer of the Garde du Corps.

From the embankments of the Spree outside the garden the Sunday promenaders, of whom there were many, could behold, at a discreet distance, His Majesty in all the glory of his warlike panoply, and the black-coated ambassador approaching; a

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picture of imperial magnificence, on the one hand, and republican simplicity, on the other, in which for impressiveness the odds were far from even.

Presently the statuesque figure moved, the shining metal flashing radiantly in the soft June sunshine that glinted through the branches of the trees, a strong right hand was extended, the mask of monumental sternness fell, and a pleasant smile lighted up the well-browned features and the unfathomable gray eyes.

Unimportant what was said. It was all of the friendship that should exist between two great peoples, of their community in blood, religion, science, interest, good-will, and a common civilization; spoken on the Kaiser's part in very English English, fluently, accurately, expansively, with a roll in the "r" when President Roosevelt's name was mentioned that had in it a strong suggestion of the North Sea.

It seemed like a real personal contact, frank, sincere, earnest, and honest. One could not question that, and it was the beginning of other contacts more intimate and prolonged; especially at Kiel, where the sportsman put aside all forms of court etiquette, lying flat on the deck of the *Meteor* as she scudded under heavy sail with one rail under water; at Eckernförde, where the old tars came into the ancient inn in the evening to meet their Kaiser and drink to His Majesty's health a glass of beer.

"Did you ever see anything more democratic in America?" the Kaiser asked gleefully, one time.

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“What would Roosevelt think of this?” he inquired, at another.

Hating him, as many millions no doubt do, it would soften their hearts to hear him laugh like a child at a good story, or tell one himself. Can it be? Yes, it can be. There is such a wide difference between the gentler impulses of a man and the rude part ambition causes him to play in life! A rôle partly self-chosen, it is true, and not wholly thrust upon him. A soul accursed by one great wrong idea, and the purposes, passions, and resolutions generated by it. A mind distorted, led into captivity, and condemned to crime by the obsession that God has but one people, and they are his people; that the people have but one will, and that is his will; that God has but one purpose, and that is his purpose; and, being responsible only to the God of his own imagination, a purely tribal divinity, the reflection of his own power-loving nature, that he has no definite responsibility to men.

No one who has personally met the Kaiser in friendly mood has failed to note the fascination he is capable of exerting when he is disposed to exercise his talent for making himself agreeable. The human side of him, when he consents to be for a moment just a man, is undeniably engaging. It is only when he feels called upon to play his part as Kaiser that one sees him in a different light. Then he becomes a wholly different character, an anachronism in an age of liberal thought.

Undoubtedly William II is conscious of his per-



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sonal power of fascination, and he uses it with consummate art. To be made by an environment of pomp and ceremony to feel the presence of majesty and to expect at most a stiff and formal condescension, and then suddenly to be greeted with an outburst of human qualities that causes the Kaiser to seem like an old friend delighted to see you—could human skill devise a more subtle way of drawing a doubtful human being into the orbit of a sovereign's interests and confidence? It seems to say: "At last you have broken through all these stupid barriers that my people employ to shut you out, and me in, and keep the crowd away; but here we are now, at last, face to face. Let us open our hearts to each other!"

I am not sure that this often happens, but it has happened; and something of it is felt by every American who has been personally presented to the Kaiser. And some, once drawn into that orbit, have always remained there. And it is not the meeting alone that binds. Some added delicate remembrance; some word of praise or approbation spoken by the Kaiser in the presence of a courtier or a minister designed to be repeated to the person it concerns; in due time the suggestion, perhaps, of a decoration. Such things, coming from His Majesty, who is under no compulsion to do them, the recipient naturally reasons, must be from his heart. And in this he may be right. To scorn such courtesies would be ungracious; but to overvalue them, to see in them all that vanity suggests, to forget



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that these attentions are the warp and woof of diplomacy, would be to fall asleep on a pillow of illusion. They might even make a messenger forget the errand on which he was sent!

Although my main mission was never for a moment forgotten, and notwithstanding obstacles was never wholly despaired of, the chances of success seemed to grow less promising as time passed by. In the Foreign Office the temperature was chilly when the arbitration treaty was discussed. The bankers of Frankfort had been in communication, and out of dusty drawers had been recovered musty papers yellow with age, old securities, probably bought for a song by speculators, but represented by their owners as valid debts owed by some of the American States. One lot in particular was made specially impressive. A venal legislature had passed a bill making a state liable for the payment of an issue of bonds by a Southern railroad. The next legislature, placed in power by the indignation of the taxpayers, had declared the indorsement by the state to be illegal. As the railroad was bankrupt, the bonds were found to be worthless.

Unless the government of the United States was ready to assume responsibility for these "sacred obligations," an arbitration treaty, it was held, would be regarded as valueless in Germany. The Frankfort bankers would condemn such a treaty if they did not receive full payment. What they actually paid for these bonds, if anything, was never disclosed; but I should have a new opinion of

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Frankfort bankers if it could be proved that they ever really paid anything for them. If the government of the United States should agree to be responsible for these alleged debts, the next exhibit, I suppose, would have been a collection of Confederate notes, if they could have been borrowed from some museum.

Back of this reluctance of the Imperial Government to make an obligatory arbitration treaty was, of course, the personal aversion of the Kaiser to abridge in any way his absolute sovereignty. It is no violation of confidence to say that, in conversations upon this subject, William II, while not denying that monetary matters might, perhaps, in many cases be properly left to a court—in questions of civil rights his own German courts have sometimes decided against him—has declared his opinion that nothing of political importance can be subjected to the judgment of an international tribunal; for no principle of law can be permitted to constrain the free exercise of a sovereign will.

On the social side, a generous hospitality made life at Berlin very pleasant for the new American ambassador. One occasion, soon after his arrival, is memorable for the kindly effort made to point out the close similarity between the American and the German systems of government!

A distinguished company of men was assembled, as a token of welcome, in the palace of the Chancellor. After dinner it was found agreeable to spend the evening in the open air, in the spacious

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garden under the starlight of a glorious June sky. It was the gracious host himself, Prince von Bülow, who led up to the close friendship there had always existed between the two countries since Frederick the Great had expressed his sympathy with the American cause, and Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams had signed the unique treaty of amity with Prussia in 1785. But these were not the only bonds of mutual sympathy. Both countries had triumphed over separatism and become great powers, America by preserving the union of the states, and Germany by the formation of the Empire; which gave the ambassador an opportunity to remark upon the loyalty to the Union of our citizens of German origin and their important services in the War of Secession. Into the minor details of the method by which national unity had in each case been accomplished, and especially the manner in which the victors had treated the vanquished, it did not seem at the time necessary to enter, although they could hardly have failed to be suggested to the mind of every one present. The really original stroke, however, in this conversation was the statement by the Chancellor that a deeper analogy was to be seen in the fact that in neither form of government was the ministry dependent for its continuance upon the approval of the parliament—a point which he considered of prime importance to the continuity of public policy. “Besides,” he added, “your President has a power of appointment that is unsurpassed.”

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I was, I must confess, for a moment slightly startled by this sudden identification of the two systems, which I had thought of as almost diametrically contradictory. I could not, of course, deny the verity of the Chancellor's statements; but I ventured to suggest that, although the President's Cabinet could not be changed by the Congress after the members had once been installed, except by impeachment, they, and all other appointed officers, must be confirmed by the Senate; and I had never known important public duties to be assigned to persons of whose fitness the Senate had not had at least one chance to judge. As for permanence of policy, I added that the people were supposed to frame public policies in their party platforms, and reserved the right to choose the Chief Executive every four years; so that, if our President did possess certain constitutional powers analogous in some respects to some of those exercised by the Emperor, the electors could at intervals withhold or renew their mandate as they thought best.

A slight almost imperceptible titter of laughter, emanating from the shadows where some of the gentlemen sat, caused me to wonder if I had been indiscreet. Really, there had been no intention to reflect upon the Kaiser; but the suspicion was at once formed in my mind that perhaps *they* had been thinking of him! Of this there is, however, no further evidence. The subject was changed, the conversation followed other lines, and in due course a pleasant evening came to an end.

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The *annus mirabilis* of 1908, as it has been called, brought sore trials to the Kaiser. In the twenty years of his reign he had never attempted so much, never succeeded in so little, and was never so distrusted. It began with a private letter, written by him on February 17th, to Lord Tweedmouth, First Lord of the British Admiralty, the letter being supposed to contain a defense of Germany's naval policy and a criticism of Great Britain's attitude toward it.

The letter had not been published, and its full contents were not publicly known, but the mere fact of its existence raised a storm of objection in Germany and created resentment in England. In the British press it was represented that the design of the communication was "to make it more easy for German preparations to overtake our own." In Germany the fear was that it had contained some indiscretion compromising to Germany's position. So long as the letter was not published its contents were open to almost any interpretation, and even the most extravagant theory could boast that silence left it uncontradicted. The really important utterance concerning it was that of Lord Lansdowne, who said in the House of Commons, "Such a communication as that in question must not be allowed to create a diplomatic situation different from that which has been established through official channels and documents."

This was statesman-like, but it assumed that a distinction existed between official acts and the

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utterances of the Kaiser. Obviously, this was not in accordance with the Kaiser's own theory of government; for, being the highest authority in the state, what he said was more than ordinarily official: it was final. He could not, in any circumstances, disavow himself.

When, in March, Prince von Bülow was obliged to express himself upon the subject, he also had to oppose the Kaiser's theory. The letter being a "private" one, he said, he could not lay it before the Reichstag. That its contents were political, he frankly confessed; but he held that "the letter of a sovereign, an Imperial letter, does not, from the fact that it deals with political questions, become an act of state."

Here then was distinctly posed the question, How far does the political authority of the German Emperor extend, and how must it be exercised? Would a secret treaty, "signed before God" with another sovereign, but without the presence or knowledge of public ministers, be considered a binding official act? The Kaiser undoubtedly thought it would. The Chancellor and the Reichstag evidently thought it would not. The difference of views was very wide indeed. The whole theory of personal government was suddenly challenged. To the Kaiser it was, unquestionably, a shock. But this was only the beginning of the issue. The year had still more serious differences in store.

Personally, William II was mute during this controversy, and wisely so; for a storm was brewing



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in the nation. The people were faithful to the Kaiser, but they felt that they could not intrust their foreign affairs to his personal direction, and this the Emperor comprehended.

Silent, but not without resentment over the Tweedmouth episode, he turned his attention to other matters. Suddenly, in June, a new setting of the stage seemed desirable. On the 14th of that month the meeting of Edward VII with Nicholas II, at Reval, was interpreted as marking the conclusion of an Anglo-Russian *entente*; but William II could not tolerate friendly relations between his friends. Immediately the cry of "encirclement" was raised. That France and England had become friendly was of itself objectionable, but that Great Britain and Russia, the ally of France, should at the same time abolish their differences was too much to be borne. At the conclusion of an inspection of cavalry at Döberitz, while King Edward VII was still at Reval, the Kaiser said to his assembled officers: "It seems, in truth, that they wish to encircle and provoke us. We shall be able to support it. The German has never fought better than when he had to defend himself on all sides. Let them come on against us, then. We shall be ready!" A visit to the Court of Sweden—traditionally the enemy of Russia—immediately followed, and the remainder of the month was occupied with military reviews and a visit to Alsace-Lorraine, where the inhabitants were reminded of what their union with the German Empire had done for their prosperity.



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“Peace is assured,” the Kaiser concluded, “by our military forces on land and sea, by the German people in arms.”

It was the Kaiser's way of making himself seem essential to his own people. He knew he could count upon the army. He knew that, if Germany were in danger, the German people would follow him to the death. A military situation was needed by him, and he knew how to create it.

But his rattling of the saber did not end with this challenge, which had sent a thrill through Europe and caused a profound sensation in Germany. To add to the effect, on September 11th he proceeded in person to approach within one kilometer of the French frontier, where he passed the night and made a proposal to ascend the Hohneck from French territory. Had the French refused to permit this, or shown any discourtesy, it would, perhaps, have furnished occasion for another Ems telegram; for, had there been an excuse for it, Germany was ready for a short, swift war. But, with perfect politeness, the French officers offered to furnish the Kaiser with a body-guard to accompany him during his ascent; whereupon the project was suddenly abandoned and he announced that he was expected at Colmar.

During all these occurrences, a very marked interest was manifested in strengthening the ties of friendship with America; but progress toward the realization of America's great desire, the improvement in international organization, was merely

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marking time. While the law officers of the Foreign Office were unearthing impossible claims from the dust of previous centuries as questions that must first be settled if arbitration was to become the order of the day, the Kaiser did not conceal his personal opinion—which was, of course, his official opinion—that what had been done at The Hague was a futility that did not deserve further encouragement.

But the reaction against Edward VII's friendly visit with the Czar of Russia having in a measure served its purpose, he evidently perceived that, as upon some former occasions, he had overplayed his part as the testy War Lord. It is difficult otherwise to account for the publication, on October 28th, of the since famous interview that appeared as coming direct from the Kaiser in the London *Daily Telegraph*.<sup>1</sup>

The whole detailed history of this extraordinary performance has never yet transpired, but the main facts may be stated with entire confidence.

A lover of peace and a friend of both Germany and England, as he represented himself to be, prepared a paper, composed of statements made to him by the Emperor in the interest of a good understanding between those countries, which with the Imperial sanction was published as being in substance an interview with William II by an "unimpeachable authority."

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<sup>1</sup> The full text of this interview may be found in Shaw, *William of Germany*, London, 1913, pp. 304, 308, and is reprinted as Illustrative Document No. III, at the end of this volume.

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The veracity of the interviewer has never been called in question, but the commotion raised by the report of what the Kaiser had said to him was indescribable. "You English," William II had begun, "are mad, mad as March hares. What has come over you that you are so completely given over to suspicions quite unworthy of a great nation?" Personally, at least, he said, he had not deserved such misjudgment as he had received. "My task is not of the easiest," he continued. "The prevailing sentiment among large sections of the middle and lower classes of my own people is not friendly to England. . . . I strive without ceasing to improve relations, and you retort that I am your arch-enemy."

Then followed statements that those in Germany who had approved intervention in Morocco were "mischief-makers"; that, although German sentiment was hostile to England during the South African War, he had refused to receive President Kruger when Holland and France were fêting him; that France and Russia had invited his government "to join them in calling upon England to put an end to the war," as the moment had come "to humiliate England to the dust"; that he had prepared, with the aid of his General Staff, a plan of campaign against the Boers which Lord Roberts had practically followed; and that Germany's navy would some day, owing to the rise of Japan, be necessary to England in the great debates of the future.

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Great Britain was amazed, but Germany was exasperated. The Kaiser, then, according to his own public statement, had been all the time a secret ally and helper of England, and an enemy of the Boers with whom the Germans had sympathized! His attitude toward Morocco had been a sham and a pretense. He had held his own people up to reprobation as enemies of England, and called himself England's devoted friend. And this was *their* Kaiser!

A stranger might easily have inferred from the tide of public feeling that swept over the Empire that William II was about to be deposed. The serious journals were loud in their protests. The comic papers were remorseless in their caricatures. One would have supposed that there was no law in Germany against *lèse-majesté*.

What added most to the bitterness of public feeling was the apparently perfect *insouciance* of the Kaiser, who, during the climax of the storm, from November 4th to 7th, was hunting with the Hereditary Prince of Austria, and from November 7th to 16th was with Prince Fürstenberg, at Donaueschingen, being constantly amused with vaudeville entertainments reported to be of a character utterly inharmonious with the serious time he had brought upon his Empire.

Most incredible to relate, the manuscript of the interview had been submitted before publication to the Chancellor; but Prince von Bülow confessed that he had never taken the trouble to read it, and

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the subalterns at the Foreign Office had turned it over to its author without criticism.

This, to some extent, relieved the Kaiser from reproach, but only slightly; for when the Chancellor, humbly taking upon himself blame for his own negligence, offered his resignation, the Kaiser, who needed him as a defender before the Reichstag, refused to accept it; and Prince von Bülow, thus virtually absolved, stood up in the tribune, not to excuse William II as really innocent of wrongdoing, but, after as much as possible attenuating his master's error by skilfully commenting on certain points, he in effect threw the whole burden on the Kaiser by pledging that, while he remained Chancellor, such personal interference in the conduct of foreign affairs should not be allowed to occur again!

This, in fact, was the real issue. The Germans did not wish to depose the Emperor, but they were weary of the indiscretions of William II. They did not in their hearts believe in his personal government, but they had never dared to oppose it. Now all parties were among the protestants. The Kaiser was obliged to bow before the storm. He had deeply humiliated his people before the world. They resented it. They were at the same time ashamed of his conduct and indignant with him. When he came back to Potsdam he was a chastened man. He felt that he had been scourged, and publicly. If he had humiliated his people, they in their turn had humbled him. No doubt he was resentful,

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but he was passive. He made no reply. Had he claimed all that he thought to be his right, had he insisted that what he had said in the interview had been sincerely said and was the truth; above all, had he attempted to end the public criticisms in the Reichstag and the press by dissolving the parliament and suppressing newspapers, there would have been a revolution. He did none of these things. He simply let the storm pass by.

Just what occurred between the Emperor and his Chancellor at Potsdam we do not know. Some were certain that he had shown violent anger. But the result was submission on the point at issue. He did not accept the Chancellor's proffered resignation; and he promised to recognize, as Prince von Bülow's interpretation of the Imperial Constitution required, the constitutional "responsibility" of the Chancellor for official acts relating to foreign affairs.

"His Majesty," stated the *Official Gazette*, "while unaffected by public criticism which he regards as exaggerated, considers his most honorable Imperial task to consist in securing the stability of the policy of the Empire while adhering to the principle of constitutional responsibility. The Kaiser accordingly indorses the statements of the Imperial Chancellor in the Reichstag, and assures Prince von Bülow of his continued confidence."

The words of the Chancellor which the Kaiser indorsed were: "The perception that the publication of these conversations in England has not had



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the effect the Kaiser wished, and in our own country has caused profound agitation and painful regret, will—this firm conviction I have acquired during these anxious days—lead the Kaiser for the future, in private conversation also, to maintain the reserve that is equally indispensable in the interest of a uniform policy and for the authority of the Crown. If it were not so, I could not, nor could my successor, bear the responsibility.”<sup>1</sup>

In the mean time, another Imperial indiscretion was discovered and suppressed before it had disturbed the public mind. The Kaiser had given a private interview to an American journalist during his voyage in the Baltic. This also had been submitted to the Foreign Office and passed out for publication; and, already printed, it was to appear in an early number of an American magazine. The Foreign Office was in terror. Money was hastily cabled to New York, the whole edition of the article was withheld and paid for, and to obliterate the incident the printed pages were taken out to sea on a German war-ship and used to stoke the furnaces.

For the moment it seemed in December that the German people had successfully asserted their claim to a responsible government, and that the disaster to which the Kaiser's personal diplomacy had exposed them would never be repeated. But it was, in fact, the Kaiser's triumph. The Chan-

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<sup>1</sup> The text of Prince von Bülow's speech in the Reichstag may be found in Shaw, pp. 311, 315, and is reprinted as Illustrative Document No. IV.



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cellor was in future to administer foreign affairs, and the Kaiser's task would "consist in securing the stability of the policy of the Empire while adhering to the principle of constitutional responsibility"—*to himself!*

There could be no mistake about the meaning of this apparent concession. There was in the Imperial Constitution no "responsibility" to any one except the Emperor. There was none to the Reichstag on the part of the Emperor. The chance to place in the Constitution responsibility to the parliament of the people was allowed to slip by without decisive action. The Kaiser was left with the same supreme authority that he possessed before; and, nine years afterward, in 1917, when the Reichstag, by a large majority, declared, "We are driven by no lust of conquest," and professed to repudiate "forced acquisitions of territory and political, economic, and financial violations," the Chancellor of the Empire, Doctor Michaelis, was able to announce from the tribune, "The constitutional rights of the head of the Empire must not be endangered, and I am not willing to permit any one to take the reins out of my hands."

Thus, without a serious effort on the part of the people to prevent it, the German Empire permitted itself to be effectively and definitely Prussianized. In the Empire, as in Prussia, the Emperor is without legal responsibility to the people. There were presented, as we shall see later, still other opportunities for securing a truly responsible government;

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but there was none when the public mind was so completely aroused from its lethargy and so fully awake to the danger that the Emperor's personal system had incurred. Thenceforth, Kaiser William had only to sound the tocsin of alarm in order to recall to the nation that, having chosen submission to a War Lord, it must abide by the consequences of its act.

## CHAPTER V

### THE KAISER'S REVERSION TO TYPE

Kaiser William II had been deeply chastened by the experience of 1908, but it had not made him penitent. He felt that he had been wronged by his own people, as well as misunderstood abroad. Although Prince von Bülow had conjured the storm and averted a revision of the Imperial Constitution, there was no reason why the Kaiser should love him overmuch. After all, he had allowed his master to seem the real delinquent in the *Daily Telegraph* interview, when as a faithful servitor the Chancellor might have declared that the Kaiser, who had not failed to submit his language to him before publication, had taken every proper precaution to prevent misjudgment. The Chancellor had, in fact, neglected a public duty of great importance, and yet he continued to hold his high office, with the understanding that neither he nor any successor could serve a master who should act as the Kaiser had acted! As in Bismarck's day, William II was, for the time, made to appear so distrusted by his own people as to require the guardianship of his own minister. A Hohenzollern

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could not be expected to endure for a long time an imputation so offensive.

No one understood better than William II how to evade this consequence. While his future status was still equivocal, in the midst of the public discussion of his "indiscretion," the Kaiser paid a visit to the home of Count Zeppelin, who was at the moment in great public favor because of the success he had attained, after long experiments and many failures, in the construction of an air-ship capable of sailing long distances and carrying a heavy charge of explosives. The military had taken a great interest in the enterprise, and the general public also; for here, it was believed, was a new instrument of warfare that could place the cities of Great Britain at the mercy of an easy and effective German invasion.

On November 10, 1908, the very day of the interpellation in the Reichstag regarding the unfortunate interview, the Kaiser conferred in person the Order of the Black Eagle upon Count Zeppelin, embracing him publicly three times, and praising him in an address, in which he said:

"The monarch and the country may well be proud to possess such a son, the greatest German of the twentieth century, who, by his invention, has led the human race to a turning-point in its history. It would not be an exaggeration to say that we are to-day passing one of the most important moments in the history of civilization. May it be given to us to be able to say, upon our last day of life, that

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we have served our dear country with as much success as you.”

Here was no warlike word, but the speech was well understood. Whatever the errors of the past, William II was still German at heart, he was still essential to the Empire, he was still the Kaiser! Even during those darkest days of national humiliation, the question arose in the minds of every German, What would become of German hopes, and dreams, and aspirations, without the Kaiser?

In the following January, when the storm of November had completely passed, the Kaiser read to the generals who came to offer him their New Year's greetings portions of an article by General Schlieffen on modern warfare, and expressed his entire personal approval of its arguments. This fact having come to the knowledge of the public through some one's unguarded loquacity, a few newspapers inquired if this was not a new indiscretion, and, in fact, a violation of the Kaiser's engagement to be cautious in his utterances. But who in Germany could ever arraign the German Emperor for speaking his mind about war, or the methods of conducting it? Was not war a part of the Kaiser's recognized business? This time no particular foreign nation was threatened by him, and the incipient criticism not only fell dead, but the Kaiser's words assured the army that its occupation with military science was dear to the heart of the Emperor.

Although the position of William II had been

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apparently thus quickly re-established in the minds of his own people, the relations of Germany and Great Britain had been left in very bad form by the Kaiser's mistaken effort to improve them. The conspicuous honors bestowed upon Count Zeppelin were not calculated to produce the same effect in England that they had caused in the German Empire, and had no tendency to inspire confidence in Germany's peaceful intentions. The Zeppelin airship was obviously a military and not a commercial venture.

In view of the fact that England and France by the agreement of 1904, and now England and Russia by the agreement of 1907, had secured a peaceful and honorable *modus vivendi*, which had ripened into a virtual compact for peace, the time was not opportune for war on the part of Germany with either of those nations; for, if it touched their common interests, they would probably stand together. Until they could be in some fashion disunited, or a case should arise in which at least one of them should have no great interest at stake, peace was practically guaranteed by the Anglo-Franco-Russian Entente.

But there were other reasons why, in 1909, Germany was desirous of avoiding immediate conflict. The domestic situation was perturbed by the financial state of the Empire. Unless some reform of the budget could be devised, the growing expenses of the army and navy foreshadowed eventual Imperial bankruptcy. Experts were making very close

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calculations, but saw no prospect of national solvency without greatly increased taxation, which nobody wanted to bear.

It was a time extremely propitious for a radical international understanding which would justify a relaxation in the cost of armament. Proposals of this kind were made, but they were not well received by the dominant caste in Germany. The army and navy were institutions which had their well-understood purposes, and there was no disposition to diminish them. On the ground that they were "purely defensive" and "the necessary guarantees of peace," it was, on the contrary, urged that they must be increased. No one could furnish any evidence of a probable attack, since all the nations were seeking peace; but, it was alleged, "there is always danger." And so, neither arbitration nor limitation of armaments seemed in Germany to make any appeal to the official mind. The only solution, it was thought, was to be found in new taxes; and new taxes were the unsteady steed upon which Prince von Bülow—whose days as Chancellor were in reality already numbered—was traveling toward the end of an uncomfortable road.

There were other and pressing reasons, in addition to the heavy cost of armament, why the international situation was disturbing. In October, 1908, Austria-Hungary had announced the formal annexation of the Slav provinces Bosnia and Herzegovina. Belonging originally to Turkey, they had thirty years before been placed under temporary



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Austrian administration by the Congress of Berlin; but, for racial and geographic reasons, they were claimed by Serbia as a part of her eventual national heritage. Serbia, supported by Russia, and in part by France and England, opposed the annexation of these provinces by Austria-Hungary as a violation of the Treaty of 1878, which was universally recognized as still in force. Such a step, it was held, should not be taken without referring the action to the decision of a general European conference; but Germany, in tones that were unequivocal, answered, "No." At St. Petersburg the Kaiser had given the Czar to understand that an attempt on his part to dispute Austria-Hungary's action, either by arms or by insistence upon a conference, would be met by the vigorous opposition of Germany. In brief, it was submission or war.

We who lived through those days at Berlin and knew the attitude of the German Foreign Office on the subject of a conference, perfectly understood what was implied; and, two years afterward, the Kaiser himself, in a speech at Vienna, confirmed the interpretation of that time, by referring to himself as "an ally who had taken his stand in shining armor at a grave moment by the side of Austria's most gracious sovereign," and plainly intimated that Austria-Hungary should remember the indebtedness.

But those who were aware of the full significance of that transaction could not fail to comprehend that Germany was not acting for Austria alone, or

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to understand that at some future time, probably not very remote, the Teuton and the Slav would contend in a desperate struggle for predominance in the disintegrated Ottoman Empire, to which these provinces had once belonged, and had come to form the key that could open to Germany the door of the land route to the Far East, with free access to all the southern seas.

There were, of course, vast imperial interests at stake. In truth, the whole future of Europe was wrapped up in the ultimate solution of the Balkan question. What the peace of Europe required was that there should be no imperial contest for the domination of the Balkan peninsula. The only effective means of preventing this disaster was an agreement on the part of the great powers, especially Austria, Russia, and Germany, to promote and protect the development of independent nations in this area, on the basis of just racial and economic considerations. What the case imperatively called for was a European concert, actuated not by purely national covetousness, but by regard for the maintenance of future peace.

The situation was at best a difficult one, and it is uncertain what benefits might have immediately resulted from a conference of the powers, if it had been convoked to examine the needs which thirty years of arrested international development had produced in the Near East. It is not just to say that Germany alone is responsible for a failure to reorganize the Balkan peninsula and to secure to

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those regions perpetual peace; for it is by no means certain that a general conference would, or could, have imposed a just and permanent order of existence upon that ferment of struggling nationalities. But Germany cannot escape responsibility for defeating any solution of the problem that may have been possible, by refusing to permit such a conference to be convoked.

Looking back over all the events from 1908 to 1914, the whole world now understands the motive of German opposition to a Balkan settlement upon national lines, with the general approbation of the rest of Europe. That motive was to prevent the placing of obstacles in the path of Austria's expansion in the Balkan peninsula, of which Germany was to be the beneficiary when Austria should be ultimately incorporated in the German Empire, thus enabling the Kaiser to hem in Russia and prevent her becoming a maritime power by control of the Balkans and the Bosphorus. Hence the close relations of the Kaiser with the Ottoman Empire and the apathy of Germany toward Italy, her own ally, in the Turco-Italian War. Hence also the aid furnished to Austria in forcing through the conference of ambassadors at London, at the conclusion of the Balkan War, the establishment of the kingdom of Albania under a German prince, in order to shut Serbia off from the Adriatic Sea, thus creating a new cause of conflict, from which Austria would profit for Germany's ultimate benefit.

To keep the Turco-Balkan situation in troubled

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waters until the favorable occasion for forceful intervention should arise, when Germany could carry out the project of control from Hamburg to Bagdad—that was the Kaiser's policy. To prevent the permanent settlement of conflicts and disturbances by the concerted action of Europe—that was the means by which that policy was to be realized. To beguile each of the great powers with courteous attentions, to hold them, as far as possible, in secret co-operation with Germany, and to prevent their union for any general purpose whatever—that was the method by which these means were to be applied.

No general conference, no general treaties, no general understanding; troubled waters, professions of peace, increase of the German army and navy, personal diplomacy—this is the Hohenzollern tradition, and it was William II's program for increasing his hold on Austria and his control of Turkey.

Accordingly, in 1909, Austria made a private agreement with Turkey, by the payment of some money in purchase of the provinces, and Germany proved her devotion as an ally by obtaining from the other powers interested in the Treaty of Berlin their consent to this transaction. Russia was too much intimidated to object alone; and Serbia, thus deserted, was obliged to sign a pledge to abandon her attitude of protest against the annexation of the provinces by her already too powerful neighbor.

So far as a permanent European understanding

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is concerned, nothing could more effectively demonstrate the utter futility of the Kaiser's system than the inconsequence of the royal visits that occurred during this period, each one of which was looked forward to and commented upon at the time as an important international event, in the vain hope that these personal contacts of royalty might improve the international situation.

On February 9, 1909, King Edward VII, accompanied by the Queen, visited Berlin, and they were entertained at the royal castle. The occasion was celebrated by splendid fêtes, and at the gala dinner the usual complimentary toasts were pronounced. At a reception in the city hall, King Edward made a specially favorable impression upon the city fathers of Berlin. His simplicity, his good humor, and his straightforwardness were remarked upon. At the luncheon offered to the diplomatic body at the British Embassy, the King was especially happy in his kindly words to the representatives of different countries as they were presented to him. To the American ambassador he expressed his deep interest in the work of the Hague Conferences, with the details of which he proved to be unexpectedly familiar.

Socially, the visit of the British sovereigns, made in winter, and at considerable inconvenience, was a pleasant event; but, politically, it may be doubted if it was of the slightest value. Knowing what King Edward VII and William II really thought of each other, and how little mutual sympathy there

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was between them, the fact that they were for a few days in each other's presence, sat at the same table, and could make pleasant ceremonial speeches did not produce the conviction that the visit had accomplished any lasting good. The utmost that can ever be deduced from such an exchange of courtesies is that ceremonial intercourse is still possible and that neither side is ready for a total estrangement. On the other hand, such apparently innocent encounters not infrequently create alarm in other nations. The real motives for the meeting are not disclosed; and future intentions, which are seldom openly declared except in the vaguest possible terms, remain as obscure as if no visit had been made. Almost invariably there is a disquieting suspicion that secret engagements have been entered into that may involve disadvantages to other countries. As soon as the ceremonies are over, the press in the different countries puts its own interpretation upon the occasion, and the conflicting views end either in no result whatever or in more or less embittered controversies.

Whenever the visit of King Edward VII to Berlin in 1909 is referred to by the diplomats who were present, the most memorable incident seems to be the fact that the King had so completely outgrown his Prussian field-marshal's uniform since he had last worn it that he was threatened with strangulation, until an intrepid princess, who sat nearest to him, dexterously unhooked the standing collar that was choking him.



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In the Kaiser's speech upon this occasion there was no "indiscretion," which made it a subject of remark. In substance it simply recalled "unforgettable hospitality" at Windsor Castle, wished Their Majesties a pleasant sojourn in Berlin, thanked the Queen for her "amiable presence," and ended by seeing in the visit "a new guarantee of the continuation and development of the friendly and peaceful relations which unite the two countries." But what "new guarantee" had been exchanged? So far as the two nations knew, beyond the mere fact of the visit there was none.

But this was, in truth, all that the Kaiser desired to give, or needed to receive. There were numerous questions at issue, but none was settled. A few decorations were distributed, but no principle, so far as the public knew, had been laid down and agreed upon. No cause of future hostility had been removed. Happily, no new cause of offense had been given; for the Kaiser was able to say, "I know how much our wishes are in accord in that which concerns the maintenance and consolidation of peace." The angry charge of "encirclement" was apparently withdrawn. At least, if any encirclement existed, it was not of a nature to disturb the peace. And yet there was the same basis as before for asserting its existence. The problem of raising new taxes for the enlargement of the army and navy was still unsolved, but the urgency of it was in no degree diminished. On March 1st William II was celebrating the centenary of the Prussian Min-



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istry of War, in a speech of intense warlike fervor, in which he invoked "the divine benediction" upon the work of that Ministry, whose "task had been so fruitful," he declared, and would assure to Germany "a triumph over all the tempests which the decisions of Providence may call forth"; as if war were a part of the divine purpose, and not a human crime.

Next to the German army and navy, the mainstay of peace in Europe, according to the Kaiser, was the Triple Alliance. Having demonstrated in his favorite manner by the royal visit at Berlin the friendly relations of Germany and Great Britain, in May he received the King of Italy on board the *Hohenzollern* at Brindisi; and the next evening, at a gala dinner at Vienna, he assured the venerable Emperor Francis Joseph of the "benediction that would rest upon the alliance," declaring that "the whole world knows already with what effectiveness that alliance has contributed, even in the last few months, to the peace of all Europe."

What then had threatened the peace of all Europe in the preceding months? Absolutely nothing but the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary, in violation of the Treaty of Berlin, with the determination of the Kaiser that the other powers who had framed and signed that treaty should have nothing to say about it, and should not even be allowed to meet in a general conference to discuss it.

With Great Britain in a peaceful mood and the

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Triple Alliance, as the Kaiser contended, invincibly strong, where were the disturbing elements that had menaced the peace of Europe? Evidently, Russia was considered the guilty culprit. But of what was Russia guilty? Nicholas II had committed the flagrant crime of having sent Mr. Isvolsky on a circular mission to sound the other governments on the necessity of convoking a general conference to define or amend the Treaty of Berlin. The mission had resulted in a declaration for peace so emphatic that the right of appeal to a general conference was not insisted upon, and not even asked for, unless the Triple Alliance would freely consent to it. And so, when, on June 17th, the Kaiser was received by Nicholas II on board the Czar's yacht *Standart*, at Reval, William II said to his host:

"I see with joy in this reception a new and precious confirmation of the close and sincere friendship which unites our persons and our Houses . . . and the absolutely pacific sentiments of our two countries."

At last, if William II's system of personal diplomacy could be relied upon, Europe was finally assured of peace. So long as all conformed to the Kaiser's will, there would be no war. The War Lord, on this theory, was in truth the guarantor of general peace. This rôle gave him infinite pleasure, which he did not hesitate to confess. On September 15th, at Karlsruhe, he said to his troops:

"We Germans like to bear arms and we love the

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play of war. Our equipment weighs upon us but little, and we gladly carry it because we know that it will keep the peace, in the midst of which our work can be accomplished. . . . As long as there are men there will be enemies, . . . and as long as wars are possible our army will form a rock of bronze on which peace will be supported.”

Subjected to analysis, what is the meaning of this theory? Nothing can be simpler. Germany having already attained the hegemony of Europe, the Kaiser could keep Europe at peace, because he believed himself too formidable to be opposed. But he could also at any time destroy peace if his will was not obeyed.

What, then, were his intentions? Was he satisfied with this hegemony? If so, why burden his people with new taxes that no one wished to bear, in order to increase the military strength of Germany? And yet an increased budget for war purposes was exacted of the people. Prince von Bülow, the most skilful virtuoso Germany had ever possessed as a parliamentary leader, unable to hold his *bloc* together in the Reichstag, had, in the mean time, failed to coax the deputies to provide for the funds demanded; and on July 14, 1909, he had resigned.

Measures of financial reform—the most favorable Bülow could secure, but far below the Kaiser’s demands—were adopted; and there was, therefore, no reason why the Chancellor should abdicate, had it not been, as was at the time generally believed

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in Germany, that William II preferred in that office a person whose opinions were inspired solely by the Imperial will. The new Chancellor, Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, was a minister likely to play successfully his appointed part. A Prussian of unquestioned patriotism, broken to administrative routine by the service of a lifetime, in no sense a cosmopolitan, as Prince von Bülow was, Bethmann-Hollweg entered upon his office with no experience in foreign affairs and little knowledge of foreign countries. Neither a great orator nor an experienced negotiator, in Bülow's sense, he was an honest-seeming man, who suggested by his appearance and manner that he was a well-seasoned provincial governor rather than the Chancellor of an Empire, a type admirably adapted to execute the Kaiser's will without flinching and with the approval of a conscience subject to the authority of a superior.

The time was now ripe for the Kaiser to show himself once more to his own people as a Hohenzollern. On August 21, 1910, at Königsberg, his great *coup d'état* was made. He had waited patiently for the opportunity to wipe out the humiliation the nation had imposed upon him regarding ministerial responsibility.

"It is here," said the Kaiser, "that the Great Elector declared himself sovereign duke of Prussia, of his own right; it is here that his son placed the crown on his own head; here Frederick William I established his authority 'like a rock of bronze'; under Frederick the Great, the province partook of

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the joys and sorrows of his reign; . . . it is here that my grandfather, of his own right, placed the crown of the King of Prussia on his head, showing once again, in a precise manner, that it was accorded to him by the grace of God alone, and not by parliaments, national assemblies, or popular votes, in such a manner that he regarded himself as the chosen instrument of Heaven, and as such accomplished his duties as regent and sovereign. Adorned with this crown, forty years ago, he rode forth to battle to win the Imperial crown also. . . . Looking upon myself as the instrument of the Lord, without regard for the opinions and intentions of the day, I go my way, which is devoted solely to the welfare and peaceful development of the Fatherland.”<sup>1</sup>

There was nothing new in this utterance, which was simply a reaffirmation of what William II had repeatedly said before; but it was regarded by many Germans as a violation of the compact made in 1908, and the subject was brought up for consideration in the Reichstag.

This time the Kaiser was prepared squarely to meet the issue, and had at hand a Chancellor upon whom he could rely.

On November 26, 1910, Herr Bethmann-Hollweg, rising in the Reichstag to defend his master, announced that there was nothing in the Königsberg speech that was not reconcilable with the Constitution. It was merely a strong affirmation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Shaw, *William of Germany*, p. 332.

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monarchical principle which is the foundation of the right of the Prussian state, as well as an expression of profound religious convictions shared by numerous classes of the people. In the historical development of Prussia, it was not the Prussian people who had created royalty, but the great monarchs of the House of Hohenzollern, who had created the Prussian nation and the Prussian state. For this reason the kings of Prussia, in relation to their own people, are kings of their own right. If, in our days, there is a temptation, in the interest of democracy, to consider more decidedly than in other times that the King of Prussia is a dignitary named by the people, "one should not be astonished that the King asserts vigorously the consciousness he possesses of being subject to no sovereignty of the people." And he concluded with the positive statement:

"Personal irresponsibility of the King, independence and original existence of his monarchical right—here are the fundamental ideas of our state life, which remain alive in the period of constitutional development."<sup>1</sup>

Historically, the Chancellor stated the precise truth. William II, as King of Prussia, claimed nothing which had not from the beginning been held by his predecessors. William I, in 1861, had explicitly declared:

"The sovereigns of Prussia receive their crown

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<sup>1</sup> A report of this speech may be found in the *Official Gazette* of that date. A good abstract is given in Arren, *Guillaume II*, pp. 219, 220. See Illustrative Document No. V.



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from God. To-morrow I shall take the crown from God's altar and I shall place it upon my head. There is the meaning of royalty by divine right, and in that resides the sanctity of the crown which is indestructible."

William I had been opposed by the people, and the Prussian parliament had refused to vote the budget, but the people and the parliament had been overcome. He had passed through more sorrowful days than William II had ever known. In 1849, as a royal prince, he had fled to England. In 1862, the opposition to the reorganization of the army was so bitter that he expected to fail, and even to perish on the scaffold. And yet he had triumphed. The events from 1864 to 1871 had not only securely established the Prussian monarchy, but had created the Empire, with William I at its head. No part of this work had been done by the will of the German people or the German princes. It was the work of the army under the political guidance of Bismarck. Every German historian admits this, and Prince von Bülow himself tells the story with pride and even with boastfulness.<sup>1</sup>

William II does not hesitate to carry his preroga-

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<sup>1</sup> Von Bülow, *Imperial Germany*, says: "The opposition in Germany itself (to the founding of the Empire) could hardly be overcome except by such a struggle (as the Franco-Prussian War). By this means the national policy was interwoven with international policy; with incomparable audacity and constructive statesmanship, in consummating the work of uniting Germany, he (Bismarck) left out of play the political capabilities of the Germans, in which they have never excelled, while he called into action their fighting powers, which have always been their strongest point."



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tives as King of Prussia into the administration of the entire German Empire. It is because he is King of Prussia that he has become German Emperor, and he could not consent to be less as Emperor than he claims to be as King. So long as the army is at his back, who will undertake to limit his constitutional rights? It is as a Hohenzollern that he reigns.

As understood by William II, and practised by his predecessors in the creation of the Prussian Kingdom, sovereign right is an inherent supremacy divinely bestowed upon the Hohenzollern dynasty. The right to rule is not derived from the consent of any people. In consequence, it is not restrained by any geographical limitations. It is not, in principle, in any sense territorial. It applies wherever it can be applied—that is, wherever conquest can extend the Hohenzollern rule.

William II has expressed this idea as clearly as it can be stated. “In our House,” he said, on April 1, 1890, at Bremen, “we consider ourselves appointed by God to direct and lead the nations over which it has been given us to rule to a higher state of well-being, to the improvement of their material and spiritual interests.” Hohenzollernism is, therefore, not a limited authority, or confined to a limited area; it is a universal mission; and it extends, regardless of peoples and parliaments and temporary boundaries, to “the nations” over which the Hohenzollern dynasty may at any time be able to rule. It is, in substance, Dante’s conception of

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universal empire, the authority for which is not to be sought in the consent of peoples, but arises from the intrinsic excellence of imperial rule itself.

There is nothing in any utterance of William II, so far as I am aware, to indicate that, in his mind, there is any difference in the nature of his authority wherever it may be exercised. To admit such a difference would be to disavow the inherent supremacy of his dynasty, and to rest its authority upon some external ground, such as the will of the people or a constitutional prerogative. William II has nowhere admitted the right of any people to contradict his inherent authority to rule over them, provided he has the power to do so. Being of divine origin, nothing of human origin can stand in its way.

If there is coherence in the Hohenzollern theory as stated by William II, it has no relation to any particular race or any definite area. It would have been quite the same to this dynasty if it had started in Russia or in Turkey. As a matter of fact, it started in Poland. At just what moment, it may be asked, was the House of Hohenzollern "appointed by God"? Was it when Albert of Brandenburg, Grand Master of the Teutonic Order, in 1525, seized its territories, claiming them as his own, renounced the Catholic religion, embraced Lutheranism, and was acknowledged Duke of East Prussia by the King of Poland, from whom he then held the duchy as a fief? Or was it when, in 1656, the Duchy of Prussia was detached from the Kingdom of

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Poland by Frederick William, the Great Elector, who then passed into temporary vassalage to the King of Sweden? Or, finally, was it only after Brandenburg-Prussia had been increased by inheritance and conquest, when Frederick III, Duke of Prussia, having previously obtained from Emperor Leopold I, of the House of Hapsburg, by a treaty of November 16, 1700, in exchange for an alliance in a time of need, the reluctant pledge to permit Prussia to become a kingdom, on January 18, 1701, despite the opposition of the other German princes, set the royal crown upon his own head at Königsberg and declared himself "King of Prussia" as Frederick I?

It is not unimportant to note that the original Hohenzollern kingship was not assumed without previous negotiation with a Hapsburg Emperor, and that the permission was given in exchange for a promised service.

Upon William II's theory of divine appointment, any form of success, however won, whether by war or diplomacy, may be construed as a special divine recognition. Wherever the Kaiser's armies and navy may establish his power, there, according to his claim, he is "appointed by God" to direct and lead and rule. This is just as applicable to Belgium, or Poland, or northwestern France, or to the whole of Russia, as it was to East Prussia, or Silesia, or Hanover, or any country that has ever been brought under the control of Prussia. It is, in brief, in the simplest terms, merely the dogmatic

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assertion of the divine right of conquest. If the Kaiser's armies should extend his sway over the whole of Europe, and if his navy should carry his rule over distant seas, wherever his standard was set up, there he might crown himself at will and claim divine appointment with the same justification and the same evidence of divine right as can be put forward for the like performances at Königsberg.

The Kaiser's religious mysticism offers a very inadequate shield for his conception of personal sovereignty. A mystic he often seems to be, but in practice he is a realist and an opportunist of the most strenuous type. In Turkey he wears the dress and utters the speech of a sincere Moham-medan. At Rome he visits the Pope and sends gifts to him as if he were a fervent Catholic, professing to admire greatly the authority and discipline of the Roman Church. *Ex officio* he is a Lutheran, and urges all to help him "maintain religion in the people."

"Whoever," has said, "does not establish his whole life on the foundation of religion is lost."

But to William II religion has never meant either a definite code of ethics or a principle of self-subordination to a reign of law. It has meant to him that a directing force in nature, which he occasionally calls "Providence," has laid out a great future for the Hohenzollern dynasty; a faith that is comparable to the confidence of Napoleon I in his

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“star.” In this he is no more religious, in the ordinary sense of the word, than was Frederick II in trying to convince his people that he was divinely appointed to complete, by the seizure of Silesia, the Prussian Kingdom which his ancestors had pieced together from the heritage of Brandenburg and the spoils of Poland, Sweden, and other enfeebled powers—a mosaic so extended and yet so fragmentary that it seemed as if it were in fact a preliminary sketch of a formidable kingdom. The people might well believe, being piously inclined, that it was a work of Providence to which their King was called. For what reason had his provident father, Frederick William I, gathered and stored up treasure and disciplined troops? Obviously, Providence had given him this wisdom, in order that his son should use these resources for the augmentation of the state!

It is, however, success, and not any moral principle, that in such matters is taken as the test of divine intention. When Frederick's minister, Podewils, timidly reminded him that any rights which Prussia might ever have had in Silesia had already been renounced by treaties, the King replied:

“The matter of right is an affair of the ministers. . . . It is time to work in secret, for the orders to the troops have been given.”<sup>1</sup>

That which William II has throughout his reign most emphasized regarding religion is its utility.

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<sup>1</sup> *Politische Correspondenz, Friedrichs des Grossen, I, p. 91.*

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It makes good subjects, good soldiers, a united people. When speaking of religion, the Kaiser expressly says he does not take it in its narrow, ecclesiastical sense, but in its larger, practical application to human life.

In a letter to Admiral Hollmann, William II has stated very explicitly his views regarding Christianity.<sup>1</sup> God, he says, has eternally revealed Himself to mankind, "now in the person of this, now of that great wise man, whether pagan, Jew, or Christian. Hammurabi was one of these, Moses, Abraham, Homer, Charlemagne, Luther, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kant, Kaiser William the Great"! Bismarck is not honored by him with a place among the "great wise."

Of Christian morality he says nothing. Of Jesus he declares: "He spurs us on"; "He allures us"; "His fire burns us"; "His sympathy strengthens us"; "His displeasure annihilates us"; and "His care saves us." Finally, "He leads to victory."

Nowhere is the Kaiser more mystical than when he tries to speak on the true nature of religion. He thinks "the act of legislation on Sinai only symbolically inspired of God." Moses may have had it from Hammurabi. Still, "Our good Professor Delitzsch," he says, "would do well to avoid treating of religion as such." "Never," he concludes, "was religion a result of science, but a gushing out

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<sup>1</sup> This letter is printed in full in Noussanne, *The Kaiser as He Is*, New York, 1905. See also Illustrative Document No. VI.

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of the heart and being of mankind, springing from its intercourse with God.”

And so the Hohenzollern prerogatives, which obtain but little comfort from science, seek their safe asylum in the mysteries of religion!



## CHAPTER VI

### THE KAISER AND HIS PEOPLE

THE question is often asked in America, How is it possible for the people of Germany, so intelligent in many directions, so material and so logical in their habits of thought, and so little given to mysticism, to endure, and even to seem to respect, the pretensions of the Kaiser?

A complete answer to this question would require a careful analysis of the population of the German Empire into its different classes and their relations to one another, an account of the conditions in which German society has developed, an explanation of the special reasons why the traditions of the past have such a strong hold upon the people, and an examination of the prevailing state of mind resulting from the whole complex of influences that have determined the national psychology.

Without undertaking to touch upon all the points which an elaborate inquiry would suggest, a few observations may prove sufficient to explain what at first sight seems difficult of comprehension.

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In no country of Europe has the feudal system continued to affect the social organization to the extent it has in Germany. When the French were proclaiming the "Rights of Man" as axioms of the human mind, German princes were selling their subjects as foreign mercenaries in the same spirit as they would enter upon a transaction for the shipment of cattle; and there was no suggestion of revolt. The subject went where he was ordered to go, to fight for whatever cause the new master directed, and with the moral nature or effect of his activities the soldier had no concern. The prince took the money and used it as he pleased. No one disputed his right to treat his subjects as his property.

This relation of sovereign and subject, when not the direct result of conquest, had grown out of the subject's need of protection, in an age when near neighbors were dangerous enemies, and the sovereign's ability as a leader and organizer of his dependents to afford the protection they required. To widen his frontiers and to strengthen his realm was the first preoccupation of the prince. As a Christian—for, after his kind, he was a believer in the Christian faith—he often had a lofty conception of his mission and of his personal responsibility to God. Usually, in the medieval time, he held courage, justice, and mercy, as he conceived them, to be duties which were imposed upon him by his religion; the performance of which required, however, that he should be his own judge, free from the

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restraint of others, and with authority to require his subjects to aid him in his divinely appointed task.

From all this, made real in times of storm and stress, it resulted that society in Germany came to be regarded, not as a co-ordination of equals, but as a hierarchy of classes; a system consisting of superimposed strata running through ascending grades of superiority from the lowest and most dependent until the person of the prince was reached. All were directly responsible in their respective stations to those who stood immediately above them; and, by inclusion, to the prince, who stood at the apex of the social organization. He, in turn, by the theory, was responsible to God for his conduct as a prince. Duties to those below him he undoubtedly had and recognized, but not accountability.

So universal and persistent was this conception of society in Germany that, when the Wars of Religion were ended by the Peace of Westphalia, it was considered a sufficient concession to the religious differences of the German people that they should all follow the religion of the particular prince that happened to rule over them, Catholic, Calvinist, or Lutheran, as the case might be. *Cujus regio ejus religio*, summed up the conclusion at which the settlement had arrived.

All the more logically, in the light of this conclusion, the prince was held to be nearest to God; and by this fact authorized to prescribe to his peo-

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ple the way to eternal blessedness. What the prince did or decreed might not always be comprehensible, but obedience to him always seemed dutiful; for who could fathom the decisions of Providence? Having been appointed by God to rule, whatever the prince did must be right; for was he not divinely guided?

In the secularization of German society, a large degree of religious toleration has been recognized and much irreligion has developed; but this concession to the individual's inner convictions has not affected his status in society, or gone to the length of permitting him to claim for himself any inherent political rights, not to speak of a share in the right of sovereignty. He remains a "subject" still, and whatever civil rights he may be permitted to enjoy they are in theory granted to him as an act of sovereign grace.

To the average German subject there is nothing unnatural in this order of things. First of all, this system is a fact, and, as such, is indisputable. It has become a fact, he thinks, through the operation of a historic process; and, therefore, must be natural. The professors of jurisprudence and political philosophy in the universities, as servants of the state, have worked out a theory, in their own metaphysical way, which supports and apparently justifies the German system. From Hegel down to the latest doctor of philosophy, with few exceptions, the state is represented as a superior entity, for whose power, glory, and aggrandizement the indi-

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vidual person exists. All that he is he owes to the state, and in return he should offer it absolute and unconditional obedience. Government does not proceed from the will or even from the reason of the people. It emanates from superior authority. The state has been realized through the work of dynasties, which by conquest have obtained the right to command. Thus has been established a mold into which newly acquired subjects are to be forced as plastic material until they are conformed to its established contours. Only thus do they become a part of the nation. Poles, Alsatians, and all others who may be subjected to Imperial control are to be treated as conquered peoples until they thus conform. As the state can acquire complete unity only through monarchy, the monarch is the rightful head of the state. Such unity promotes efficiency, for it ends debate and renders authority absolute. The strength and security of the state are derived from the nation in arms—that is, the organized army, of which the monarch is the head. It is he whom the army must obey and to whom it owes fealty. His person is sacred. He cannot be made subject to contradiction. His decision is law.

In such a system, it is the army that forms the substantial framework of the nation. It is, of necessity, a system of superimposed classes. The whole of society is modeled upon it, as it was in the feudal organization. In France, every man, from the President down to the humblest laborer, is *Monsieur*. In Germany, one gives offense if the

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correct title is not employed, even in familiar address. *Majestät, Hoheit, Durchlaucht, Excellenz, Herr Geheimrat, Herr Professor, Herr Doktor*, and so on down the scale, must be properly attributed. A married woman expects to be called by her husband's title, and takes her place on the sofa in the order of her rank, as *Frau Geheimrat, Frau Professor*, etc. And to each of these grades belong certain prerogatives which it would be disloyal to the system to disregard. In the army, and to some extent in civil life, it is a recognized privilege to neglect or to abuse with impunity a person of a lower rank. On the other hand, inattention on the part of a subordinate, or an inferior in the social scale, is considered as a serious offense and deserving of punishment. As between the military and the civil population, he who walks in "the King's coat" has always the right of way. So paralyzing is the spell cast by a military uniform in Germany that a common shoemaker, arrayed in the stolen costume of an officer, was able unresisted to sack the treasury of the little town of Kopenick, near Berlin, in broad daylight, and in the presence of its custodians.

It is not astonishing that the pretensions of the Kaiser seem in no way preposterous to a German subject who has spent his life in the midst of these feudal and military traditions. So long as no particular offense is committed against himself, he is likely to think the whole system excellent. If he also is, or is likely to become, in some degree, a dispenser of authority, as a member of the nobility,



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as an officer, or an agent of government, he considers the system altogether necessary. And it must not be overlooked that, in practice, the Kaiser is not an oppressor of his people. His station is so high and his person is so remote from the ordinary subject that whatever hardships the system may impose do not seem to originate with him. On the contrary, he is regarded as the friend of the people and the promoter of their prosperity. If the laws do not always seem equitable, the fault is not attributed to the Kaiser, who, in fact, does not meddle with civil rights. On the other hand, he has often and very urgently advocated better treatment of working-men. He is interested in every new enterprise that is proposed in the Empire. He gives encouragement to all the leaders in industry, commerce, and finance. He is neither idle, nor dissipated, nor neglectful of the increase of his realm. Virtually all, during peace, have prospered under the Empire, and the Kaiser is to them the living symbol of the long-yearned-for unity and power of the German nation. Those who know Germany best understand how difficult it is for a German to dispute the Kaiser's supremacy or renounce his authority.

There is another feature of German life that must be taken into account in any serious attempt to comprehend the position of the German people with regard to government. If the traditions of feudalism are strong, they are in a certain sense intensified by what is most modern in social organi-



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zation, the idea of a minute division of labor. Nowhere in the world has this idea been carried to such lengths as in Germany. The instinct for thoroughness is strong in the Teutonic race. In education, in science, and in every form of practice, the Germans have resolved every inquiry and every performance into its elements, and have portioned these out in such a manner as to produce by means of specific training a nation of skilful experts. Their success has been so great that before the present war no form of higher or technical education was regarded in other countries as quite complete until the German professor had been heard. The gift of the German universities and technical schools to the world has, however, not been so much a contribution of original and creative thought as the result of studious method and detailed research. But for this excellence a heavy price has been paid. The narrow specialist who has concentrated his attention upon a limited field of investigation is, for that reason, necessarily deprived of the broader vision and the more generous culture which are inspired by wider interests. In this respect there has been a noticeable change in Germany even in a quarter of a century. The volume of knowledge has vastly increased, and in the use of it there has been increasing co-operation; but it has not anywhere promoted the broadest personal development of intelligence. It has produced a highly differentiated social mechanism, but it has at the same time mechanized the German mind. National efficiency has,

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no doubt, been greatly augmented, for all the talent of the country has been organized for the service of the state. This has, however, been accompanied by an almost complete loss of personal initiative in matters of government and by a diminished sense of individual responsibility for the policies of the nation.

The idea that each person is competent only in that which he has made his *Fach*, as the Germans call it, and consequently is exempt from thinking seriously of everything that does not pertain to it, is of obvious consequence for the politics of a country. Logically carried out—and the German is apt to be logical—it would leave the affairs of government entirely in the hands of bureaucrats and administrative officers. A thinking man in America or in England considers it a part of his duty to reflect upon the public policies of his country, foreign as well as domestic, to obtain information concerning them, and to form and express opinions about them. Except in very limited circles, this habit of mind does not exist in Germany. It is only when some personal interest is affected, or some national danger is incurred, that public attention is given to such matters, with the result that there is, outside the decisions of the government itself, no systematic formulation of political doctrine, in the sense of the great party platforms of other countries. The various political parties, which are so numerous that they are generally referred to as “fractions,” are based on groups of

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more or less personal interests or points of view; the Conservatives being devoted to the agrarian interests of the landholding class, the National Liberals to industrial and commercial interests, the Social Democrats to the interests of the working class mainly in the large towns, the Centrum, or Catholic party, to the interests of the Roman Catholic Church in the Empire, etc.

The business of administration being left to the bureaucrats, legislation becomes a matter of transaction between the different groups. These compromises are negotiated by the government through the Chancellor, who takes the legislation proposed in the Bundesrat—itsself a diplomatic rather than a legislative body—and gets it ratified by a majority in the Reichstag, by means of concessions of various kinds to the powerful groups, and exhortation and menace to the smaller ones; so that, in the end, the various interests are, if not reconciled, at least either pacified or subjugated. Of course, it is the great ones that triumph. The little ones have acquired the habit of waiting. It is essentially a system of organized privilege.

In all of this procedure there is no clear assertion of principle, and no real element of democracy, because there is no frank recognition of inherent individual rights or of any kind of equality between persons which government is bound to respect. By this theory "rights" are such privileges as the power of the group is able to extort from the government. If the group is feeble and alone, it will

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obtain little. If it is strong and a good trader, it will obtain much.

Beyond mere living conditions, classes, in this system, fare well or ill according to their fighting strength. When it comes to the "All-Highest," he is, theoretically, for everybody; which enables him to be in practice pre-eminently for himself and his dynasty. He commands the army, which owes fealty to him and to him alone. He is, therefore, it is assumed, in a position to see that justice is done to all. If the lawmakers do not make what he considers just laws he can send a regiment of cavalry to close the Reichstag.

There has always been something very fascinating to the human mind in this concentration of power in the hand of one man who can use it in the interest of all and maintain against the opposition of many the right of one. Given purity of motive, clearness of intelligence, and courage to enforce righteousness, great masses of men may feel that they can have no better guarantee that all their rights will be respected than by committing them all, without reserve, to such a supreme trustee.

This is the boast and the promise of imperialism. All Germans born in Germany since 1870 have lived all their lives under the influence of this faith, and have from childhood been dedicated to this imperial cult.

Personally, Kaiser William II has been variously esteemed at different times. As the "All-Highest" he is exempt in Germany from the public scrutiny

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and criticism which are applied to the heads of state in democratic countries. Some bold minds have, however, privately expressed the view that it would be better if the Kaiser were more of a specialist in whatever specifically belongs to the *Fach* of being Kaiser, less versatile, less given to the assumption of omniscience. They think he would be even more the Kaiser if he did not dabble in music, painting, the drama, architecture, etc. William I, they argue, did none of these things, and yet he was an excellent Kaiser.

But, on the whole, on the principle that the specialist knows best, who—not being himself Kaiser—has the “authority,” taking the word in its strictly scientific sense, to say what the Kaiser should do? A logical application of the division of labor, and of thereby creating experts, would require that the Kaiser, being Kaiser—and especially having been Kaiser now for thirty years—should seem to the German mind to understand his business better than any one else! And thus, that which is most modern in German social organization seems to confirm that which is most ancient; and the Kaiser, whose whole régime rests on a union of medieval conceptions with modern methods, becomes the beneficiary of both.

No one can rightly comprehend the psychology of modern Germany who does not carefully consider the effect of this union of the feudal spirit and modern industrialism. The feudal motive was protective organization under a military leader.

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It was not difficult, therefore, to graft upon the dying stock of feudalism the new protective organization of industry under the shadow of the imperial sword. To the German tribes the outside world had always seemed a group of enemies against whose hostile designs the state was a necessary provision of defense. To increase the forces of this defense was in every kingdom and principality of Germany a common aim. The war with France, by uniting the princes in common action, revealed the possibility of a vastly extended defensive organization, and the present German Empire was the fulfilment of this general desire. Alone, it has been represented, no one of the German kingdoms and principalities, not even Prussia, could have entered into economic competition with the great powers of Europe. Together, they constitute a formidable phalanx of economic strength.

Again and again Kaiser William II has proclaimed in his public utterances the necessity of military protection on land and sea for the progress of German industry and commerce. The Germans understood him as no other people could. All their feudal habits of mind gave confirmation to his exhortations. To them the real significance of the Kaiser was that he was their War Lord, their powerful protector. While they worked their Emperor would guard.

In every provincial German mind there was a traditional picture that spoke for the Kaiser—the



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image of the watchful sentinel keeping guard behind the turrets of the castle wall, overlooking the fields, the vineyards, and the village nestling at the castle's foot, where in the medieval time their ancestors, looking up from tilling their fields or tending their herds, awaited the blast of the bugle that called them to arms when the spears of an advancing foe glinted over the hill-tops.

To-day the picture is amplified to imperial dimensions; but the quality of the emotion in the breast of the German is quite the same when the coming of the Kaiser's automobile is heralded by the three silvery notes from the chasseur's horn, or the blue and white imperial special train speeds along the iron highway. With bowed heads, the simple peasants line the way, when the advent of the Emperor is announced, and whisper, as if in the presence of a sacred epiphany, "*Er kommt, der Kaiser!*"

Let us clearly understand that the deep longing of the German heart has never been for individual liberty, in the English or American sense. Its craving is for exemption from solicitude. To the German, who even when in bondage can believe he is free, "freedom" means being free from want and misery. He demands no other liberty.

Here is the secret of his attachment to the Empire. It is for him *ein feste Burg*.

What Germans have longed and hoped for has never been the liberty of democracy, but the protection of a strong man capable of giving them



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material security and prosperity. Even the constitutionalists of 1848 were ready to accept a Prussian king, if he would only grant them written guarantees. What they were seeking was, as the poet Geibel has expressed it, "a successor to Barbarossa."

"O Destiny," he exclaims, "grant us a man, only a man. . . . A man is necessary to us, a descendant of the Nibelungen." "War, war!" he cries. "Give us war, to replace the quarrels which dry up for us the marrow in our bones."

The ideal War Lord, God's vicar on earth, wise, majestic, fearless, and strong—that is the German idea of government. Rights of man, constitutions, votes, what are these but pretense and confusion? Why should any one vote, when wisdom has already decided? For what should one vote? For taxes? But, alas! they would have to be paid out of hard earnings. In Mecklenburg the people have never wished either for a constitution or a representative parliament. They leave everything to the Grand Dukes.

This persistent craving for a ruler, this instinct of personal fealty to a superior, this readiness to fight at a word of command—these are the racial qualities of the German people that have made them as clay in the hands of their Nibelung Kaiser.

But there is more than romanticism in this state of mind. Among the characteristics of the feudal time was the increase of strength, the constant pushing back of the frontiers, the absorption of

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neighbors, and the extension of the realm. The feudal habit has become an instinct in the German race. As an individual and as a nation, no hesitation is felt by the Teuton to take wherever he can. No opportunity is to be neglected, and no advantage gained is to be surrendered. In private life acquisition is esteemed a virtue, and is called thrift. In national development it is conquest, and is claimed as a rightful exercise of superior strength. What is surprising to those who reflect on it is that the moral obligations which the very existence of society renders necessary in civil life are held to have no existence as between states and nations.

It is anomalous that in the present advanced condition of the world such sentiments should prevail in Germany. The Germans—even the Kaiser himself—refer with pride to the lofty ethical teachings of their great philosophers, and particularly to the “categorical imperative” of Immanuel Kant. What is this famous precept? The Kaiser, who publicly applauds it, seems to have forgotten its meaning and to remember only the name. The very essence of the categorical imperative is the universal application of a moral judgment. “So act that thy action could be made universal,” is the formula which, according to Kant, the conscience categorically imposes. It excludes all merely personal expediency. If the universal application of a judgment would be a human good, then it is right. If it would be an evil, then it is wrong.

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How then can it be held that morality ends with national frontiers? Should falsehood, bad faith, hatred, barbarity, the taking of life for the possession of another's goods, be made universal? If not, and Kant is to be followed, they are categorically prohibited. They are as wrong between groups of men as they are between individual persons. And the philosopher of Königsberg himself draws from his general principle all its logical consequences. He most hotly condemns war, and particularly dynastic wars. There must, he declares, be perfect honesty in international dealings and good faith in the interpretation of treaties. Every state, he contends, should have a republican constitution, by which he means a constitution based directly and solely on the individual rights of citizens. When the Kaiser and his apologists appeal to the world to respect Germany because Germany believes in and follows Kant's high morality, they forget that the great philosopher had no love for Prussia, because Prussianism meant to him the exact reversal of all his ethical maxims.

"Looking beyond Prussia to America, in whose struggle for independence he took a keen interest, and looking to France, where the old dynastic monarchy had been succeeded by a republican state," writes one of his commentators, "Kant seemed to see the signs of a coming democratization of the old monarchical society of Europe. In this growing influence on the state of the mass of the people, who had everything to lose in war and little to

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gain by victory, he saw the guarantee of a future perpetual peace.”<sup>1</sup>

The truth is that with the growth of material interests in Germany the ethical sense, which was once so strong in the German character, has given place to mere political expediency. The influential writers of contemporary Germany boast loudly of German virtue, but they repudiate the sanctity of international obligations.

I have sought diligently to find one contemporary Prussian writer of wide influence who insists upon the binding nature of moral obligations upon governments. Förster of Munich has, indeed, written caustic criticisms of Bismarckian diplomacy, and Schücking of Marburg has bravely advocated international organization on a juristic basis, but they have few followers and stand almost alone in Germany. I have hoped that some Prussian jurist might have the courage to declare that not all Prussians hold with the Bernhardis, the Lassons, and the Kohlers, that force is the only measure of international justice. In my search I turned quite naturally toward my personal acquaintances in Berlin, and decided that this might be expected from Professor Otto von Gierke, an erudite jurist

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<sup>1</sup> Campbell Smith's introduction to his translation of Kant's essay on *Perpetual Peace*, London, 1915. Since the present war some writers have included Kant among the absolutists as regards the nature of the state. Passages may be cited from his *Philosophy of Law* to support this view, but the inference that he was an absolute monarchist is unfair to Kant. His views, as contrasted with those of Hegel, are referred to in the present writer's *Rebuilding of Europe*, New York, 1917, pp. 14, 43-50, 176. Practically, at the end of his life, Immanuel Kant was a republican.

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who has advocated with great ability the corporate rights of communities and revived interest in the ethical conception of sovereignty entertained by Althusius; and this, I find, is his position:

“Foreigners do not realize that war fulfils the world-historic task of pitilessly destroying decaying culture, worn-out law, degenerate freedom, in order, with native strength, to breed rejuvenated culture, a juster law, and a more genuine freedom. They cannot understand that military power has the right to decide the life or death of nations or states.”<sup>1</sup>

I confess that I do not comprehend why my esteemed friend regards it as a national distinction that Germans alone “understand” this “right”; nor do I feel that it is a reproach to be of those who do not understand it. Wherein does military power reveal its “right” to decide the life or death of nations? Whence is it derived? How, unsupported by a just cause, can it constitute a right? It may be employed either for a good or a bad purpose, but is it not new doctrine to be told that military power in itself has the “right” to decide the life or death of nations? Being a new doctrine, it requires new proofs. Are they to be found in the mere fact that Germany has destroyed the life of Belgium by the murder and deportation of its innocent citizens and the expropriation of their possessions?

There is, it seems, a “right” for Germany that

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<sup>1</sup> Gierke, *Unsere Friedensziele*, Berlin, 1917.

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exists for no other nation. "Peace," says Professor Gierke, writing as a jurist and in the name of what he considers equity—"peace must bring us an extension of power in East and West, in Europe and beyond the seas—extension through closer contact with our allies, but also by securing better protected frontiers, and, further, by retaining a firm control in the conquered enemy territory, by winning equal sea-power on seas freed from English tyranny, and thus, at the same time, an unrestricted share in world-trade; and, finally, by increasing our oversea colonial possessions and acquiring strategic points such as will secure their connection with the home country. Nor do we intend to renounce an indemnity for the huge sacrifices which we have made, and we expect in the East the cession of ample land for colonization in place of cash payment."

What has become of the Kantian faith in the future of international equity, when accredited jurists speak like this? Is this the final result of the imperial subjugation of the universities, or is it a moral degeneration produced by a decay of mentality?

But the disappointment in not finding a corrective to irresponsible imperialism, pursuing its quest for territory, and colonies, and strategic points, to be wrested by the right of military power from mutilated nations, is deepened by the fact that there are left remaining no sacred obligations even between sovereigns. Treaties—the only possible



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basis for international organization—says Gierke, may be set aside at will; for “the clause *rebus sic stantibus* can always be invoked!” “The decision as to whether there has been a breach of a treaty is, in the end, a naked question of power.”

All government, then, is, in reality, “a naked question of power.” Peoples have no rights, except what military power grants. Everywhere, in the state where the conquered become subjects, and between states, military power has the decision of life and death. And thus, with one blow, this learned jurist destroys utterly the whole science of jurisprudence, to which he has devoted a long and laborious life, and reduces the whole problem of justice to a naked question of power.

But Professor Gierke destroys more than the idea of justice, he robs the sovereign of the sentiment of honor. Not only where there has been an actual change of relations may the clause *rebus sic stantibus* be invoked, but it may, he says, “always be invoked.”

But this is old doctrine in Prussia. Frederick the Great advised his nephew: “Never blush for making alliances with a view to your being the only one to draw advantage from them. Do not make the stupid mistake of not abandoning them whenever you believe that your interests are at stake, and especially maintain vigorously this maxim, that to despoil your neighbors is to take away from them the means of doing you an injury!”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick the Great, *Politische Correspondenz*, Vol. I, p. 244.

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And now, I ask, how is it that Kaiser William II has made this Prussian creed also a German doctrine?

There are two answers to this question: He has extended to the Empire the Hohenzollern conception of absolute personal authority, the divine right to impose a supreme will; and he has appealed to *Deutschtum*, of which he claims to be the divinely appointed head, to become its instrument.

It is will, not reason, which, in this conception, is the source of authority. There is no reference to principles, no definition of rights, no invocation of collective judgment. The right to rule consists in the power to compel.

The appeal to *Deutschtum* is an invitation to partnership in the results of this system. He says to the German aspiration for a War Lord:

“Behold me, I am he, the anointed of our old German God; I offer you protection, I will enlarge your borders, I will aid you to rule, as the superiority of *Deutschtum* entitles you to rule, over many nations.” He has called to the deep, and the deep has answered him.

What, then, is the spirit of *Deutschtum* to which the Kaiser has appealed?

Being a sentiment, rather than an idea, *Deutschtum* is not easily comprehended by one who does not entertain this form of feeling; for, while ideas may be shared by all races through their intelligence, a sentiment is incommunicable by definition. *Deutschtum* is, therefore, incapable of rational ex-

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planation. It may be described as a complex state of exaggerated feeling, composed of a sense of racial superiority, intense love for a traditional mode of life, a lust for power and possession, and a disposition to fight for domination over whatever offers opposition to this supreme embodiment of human excellence. It can be classed only as an orgasm.

If *Deutschtum* were really an idea, or capable of statement as an assemblage of ideas, it would not be necessary to fight for it; it could, in that case, be reasoned about, and logically defended. But no German has ever thought of extending it by reasoning or argumentative persuasion. He cannot even prove that the inhabitants of the German Empire are really of one race, to say nothing of intrinsic superiority. He cannot name any excellence of modern civilization that is of purely Germanic origin. He cannot deny that Germany has borrowed from non-German sources nearly everything that distinguishes a highly civilized from a rudely primitive state of society. He despises the Latin race, as he does the Slav, and yet all that is most valuable in German *Kultur* has been absorbed from Latin sources. The German Empire is itself a Teutonic imitation of the Roman. There would be no "Kaiser" if there had not been a "Cæsar."

There remains only the assumption of German superiority, which, when analyzed, in the main, comes down to superiority in physical strength. The Prussian test of superiority is war, the

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art and science of imposing one's will by armed force.

Starting from this postulate, logical procedure is quite simple. "Rights," as known and accorded in Germany, are the trophies of strength. They have been won by fighting, or by threatening to fight. War settled the status of the Germanic tribes, it created the Prussian state, and the Prussian state has created the German Empire. The German classes do not all love one another, but each one takes its place in the social scale according to its fighting capacities.

In like manner, runs the Prussian argument, nations should take their places. Since might makes right, and Germany is strong, it is right for Germany to conquer and to rule other peoples. The Kaiser's doctrine has become, in effect, the German people's doctrine. Their great teachers have supported it. He has never been rebuked by the ruling classes for asserting it. To dispute him would undermine the whole present German system. If it were once conceded that human beings, as such, possess inherent and inalienable rights, the whole imperial organization and claim to expansion would receive its logical death-blow. It is, in truth, in the tragic moments when William II makes the whole question of the world's peace turn upon the power of the sword held in German hands that he seems to his admirers most transcendently the Kaiser.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE KAISER'S ATTITUDE TOWARD WAR AND PEACE

IT should never be forgotten that, as Kaiser, the main personal interest of William II is to be esteemed an efficient War Lord. For Prussia war has in the past been the principal industry. The kingdom has been created by war. It is war that made the King of Prussia German Emperor. No one who in the last twenty-five years has lived in Germany has any doubt that war is relied upon as a means of maintaining and increasing the Prussian domination. Nothing in Prussian life, history, philosophy, or literature points toward the conclusion that military power has fully accomplished its task in extending the limits of the German Empire. No one of wide public influence in Germany has ventured to assert that war is a scourge that should, if possible, be prevented. On the contrary, war is generally believed in as a divine institution, as a biological necessity, and as an essential moral discipline. The subject of legally organized peace is rarely discussed in Germany. The necessity of war is regarded, as the Germans say, as an established standpoint. As much as eating and

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drinking, war is considered a natural phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> To speak in Germany of ending war altogether by a voluntary compact between nations is to expose oneself to ridicule as a visionary. When in other countries plans are proposed for an enduring international peace, the suggestion is considered in Germany either as a sign of degeneration and a mark of effeminacy, or more generally as an example of hypocrisy, having for its ultimate purpose the weakening of the Teutonic defenses. Thus it was widely held in Germany that the Czar's proposal to limit armaments "was secretly intended to place Germany at the mercy of her powerful neighbors"; and the English desire to fix a limit to the building of war-ships was taken to be a sign of economic weakness on the part of Great Britain.

Like any other business, from the German point of view, war is not to be undertaken or conducted in a reckless or hazardous spirit, but prudently and scientifically. It requires preparation both material and moral, and the time for action must, if possible, be chosen with foresight. Being an affair of the state, it has nothing to do with individual morality; for the state knows no law but the will of the sovereign, whose end is the augmentation of power by means of armed force. When the sovereign calls, the subject's duty is to answer and obey. The sovereign alone can know what the hour demands;

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<sup>1</sup> One cannot help recalling Luther's statement that war "*an ihm selbst göttlich und der Welt so nötig und nützlich sei, wie Essen und Trinken oder sonst ein ander Werk.*"



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and he should, therefore, not be embarrassed by hesitation or questioning. Delay may mean defeat.

In so far as such a state of mind is believed to require justification to conscience and intelligence, this is found in the belief that other nations, especially those previously defeated in war, intend at the first favorable opportunity to renew the conflict. Peace, upon this supposition, is only a temporary suspension of armed hostility, and war is the normal and permanent reality. When active hostilities will actually break out is, therefore, only a question of time and opportunity. It is, however, certain and inevitable. Wisdom, therefore, consists in being always ready and always stronger than any possible adversary.

It is an error to suppose that this doctrine is held only by occasional writers, like Clausewitz and Bernhardi. It has been so long inculcated in Prussia and diffused through the whole German Empire that it has become virtually the national German creed.

To those foreigners who had never heard of Bernhardi's doctrines the sudden revelation of their existence was a surprise, and it was believed that this defense and glorification of deliberately planned war was something new. In Germany this literature produced no shock, and did not even give rise to controversy; for the postulates underlying Bernhardi's whole scheme of thought were already accepted by the greater number of persons who had any interest in the subject. To the military pro-

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fession in Germany the teachings of Bernhardi were mere commonplaces.

There is nothing in these views regarding war that cannot be found implicitly, at least, in the doctrines of Prince von Bismarck. He not only acted upon them, but glorified and proclaimed them with a cynicism and in a spirit of opportunism that is unparalleled. With him wars were enterprises to be deliberately planned and executed, but he was careful not to provoke too many enemies at once. In the Danish war, he says, "from the moment when our troops crossed the Eider, I was ready each week to see the European Council of Elders interfere in this Danish affair, and you will agree with me that this was highly probable." Only "a circumspect use of events," he declares, enabled us to ward off the existing danger of turning the duel between Prussia and Austria in 1866 into a general European war, but France and Russia were skillfully kept neutral. When in 1867 the Luxemburg problem arose, "only a somewhat firmer reply was needed," he affirms, "to bring about the great French war in that year—and we might have given it if we had been so strong that we could have counted on success." As it was, France was kept in a state of negotiation with Prussia because of the fear that Italy and Austria would make common cause with her; but the purpose to isolate France and then defeat her was steadily held in mind until 1870, when the occasion seemed opportune. In the mean time the apprehension of war was so great in

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Prussia that, as Bismarck informs us, he received calls from merchants and manufacturers who said: "The uncertainty is unbearable. Why don't you strike the first blow? War is preferable to this continued damper on all business!" And he adds, "We waited quietly until we were struck, and I believe we did well to arrange matters so that we were the nation which was assailed and were not ourselves the assailants."<sup>1</sup>

We now know how matters were "arranged" by the alteration of the Ems telegram. When Moltke had assured him that it would be advantageous to Prussian arms for hostilities to begin at once, Bismarck prepared and read to Moltke and Roon, with whom he had been dining, the revised telegram, adding: "If, in execution of the orders of His Majesty, I communicate this telegram as I have worded it to the newspapers, and if I have it at once telegraphed to our different embassies, it will be known in Paris before midnight. It will have the effect of a red flag upon a Gallic bull. Success depends entirely on the first impressions that the origin of the war will produce at home and abroad. It is most important that we should appear as the attacked party."<sup>2</sup>

It is in this school of ruthless opportunism that Kaiser William II learned his first lessons in the art of statesmanship. To him also merchants and

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<sup>1</sup> Bismarck's speech in the Reichstag of February 6, 1888, made famous by his sentence, "We Germans fear God and naught else in the world."

<sup>2</sup> Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, Vol. I, p. 446.

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manufacturers have come with their demands that the military and naval power of Germany should be employed for territorial and especially colonial acquisitions. With these annexationists and expansionists to impress the business world, and the army and navy ever ready for action, Kaiser William has looked upon war, not as a misfortune to be always avoided, but as a part of his mission in the task of increasing the power and might of the German Empire.

Temperamentally, more than any other Hohenzollern except, perhaps, the present Crown Prince—who is said to have expressed his hope that there would be war “for the fun of the thing”—the Kaiser is susceptible to appreciation of the romantic side of war, simply as an interesting contest. The agony and horror of it seem never to have impressed his imagination. It is, in itself, for him something “glorious.” The moral element does not seem to be in any way associated with war in his mind. It is a great game. What other ruler, for example, would have deemed it appropriate to send a high decoration, the “*Ordre Pour le Mérite*,” at the same time to the Russian General Stössel for the brave defense of Port Arthur and to the Japanese General Nogi for his heroic attack upon that fortress? And, strange to say, it is not personal bravery that he most highly commends. At the battle of Moukden, he declares, General Kouropatkin was gravely at fault for leading his men in person, and General Oyama was far more to be com-

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mended, he thinks, for conducting the battle by telegraph from a post in the rear of his army. "He was as calm as a chess player who moves his pieces," the Kaiser has said.

To William II war is merely a problem of power. Here lies the seat of his interest. I cannot believe that he is constitutionally a ferocious and blood-thirsty man. I do not doubt that he would rather alleviate intense bodily or mental suffering than inflict it. But the idea of power, especially his own personal power, seems to induce an actual hypertrophy in his brain when he is opposed. He claims to be a sportsman, but he does not tranquilly bear defeat. Those who sail against him in the races, I think, really prefer that he should win. The whole course of his life has encouraged this impatience with even minor opposition. He cannot endure it. He would rather sacrifice a million lives than lose a battle. "Calais must be taken," he proclaimed in this war; and when it was demonstrated that Calais could not be taken with the forces at disposal, his indignation with General von Kluck, to whom he had assigned the task, was reported as violent.

As an example of the Kaiser's "*furor Teutonicus*," his address to the troops of the punitive expedition that in 1900 was sent to China to aid in suppressing the Boxer Rebellion has often been cited. The German Minister, Von Ketteler, had in the uprising been murdered, and there was just cause for indignation; but it was expressed in terms

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that breathed such a spirit of vengeance that Von Bülow thought it necessary to revise the phraseology officially given out. He was, however, too late to suppress the verbatim report in the Bremen newspapers, which was as follows: "You know well that you are to fight a cunning, fearless, well-armed and cruel foe. When you meet him, understand pardon will not be given, prisoners will not be taken. Whoever falls in your hands is doomed. As a thousand years ago the Huns under King Etzel made a name for themselves which renders them still terrible in tradition and story, in like manner may the name 'German' in China through you be so famed that for a thousand years to come no Chinese may venture to look askance at a German."<sup>1</sup>

The troops did not fail to execute to the limit the command of their master. Innocent peasants were treated as Boxers, and in resentment of these cruelties whole provinces that had been peaceful rose in revolt. Rich spoils were plundered and taken to Germany, and a heavy indemnity was exacted. If the Kaiser coveted the name of "Hun," the conduct of his troops in China was not disappointing. There, as later in Belgium and elsewhere, they succeeded in earning it by the deliberate practice of frightfulness, and the honor to which the Kaiser aspired has been accorded to him in every civilized country.

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<sup>1</sup> The attempt to alter the words of the Kaiser's speech is detailed by Zurlinden, *Der Weltkrieg*, Zurich, 1917. I, p. 315.



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When the time for Chinese atonement came, Kaiser William determined to inflict a disciplinary humiliation that brought upon him ridicule, even in Germany. Prince Chun, a relative of the Emperor of China, was sent to Germany to make amends for the action of the Boxers. Having arrived in Switzerland, in September, 1901, the Prince was informed that he would be required by the Kaiser to appear before him at Potsdam; and the Kaiser, being seated on a throne, his marshal's baton in his hand, Prince Chun was to kotow before him three times, in the ancient manner of the Chinese court. As this act implied absolute degradation, the Prince declined to render this homage, which was afterward compromised to three deep bows as the envoy approached the throne. The ceremony then proceeded as ordained.

The style of the speech delivered in reply to the expression of the sincere and deep regret of the Emperor of China for the murder of Von Ketteler by a Chinese soldier betrays the official hand of the Protocol, and is lacking in the Kaiser's fervid eloquence. While exculpating the Emperor of China, it emphasizes the guilt of his advisers and his government.

"Let them not deceive themselves," runs the speech from the throne, "by supposing that they can make atonement and receive pardon for their crime through this mission alone, and not through their subsequent conduct in the light of the prescriptions of international law and the moral principles of

civilized peoples." Conditioned on "directing the government of his great Empire in the spirit of these ordinances," His Majesty the Emperor of China was in the end assured of "peaceful and friendly relations" with Germany.<sup>1</sup>

The ground for discerning the hand of the Protocol in this formal speech is, that in the Kaiser's own personal addresses he never refers to "the prescriptions of international law," or to "principles" of any kind. It is one of the marked idiosyncrasies of the Kaiser's mind that he never seems to think in abstract terms upon any subject. His intelligence is intuitive, not reflective. Neither war nor peace appears to him a matter of principle. His favorite expressions reveal this semi-mystical state of consciousness. "We shall remain closely attached," he said in his first address to the army, "whether God gives us peace or storm"; as if it were all a matter of contingency, in which the human will has no part and consequently no responsibility.

There is something Oriental in the Kaiser's manner of dealing with great questions, which suggests to the mind the primitive despotisms of Assyria or Babylonia. He speaks as if he were a Tiglath-Pileser or a Nabopolassar. Nothing appears to him subject to law. All is personal, and is adjudged meritorious or culpable, according as it favors or embarrasses his plans and purposes. Not only so,

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<sup>1</sup> Shaw, *William of Germany*, relates the story of the penitential pilgrimage of Prince Chun.

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but occurrences having primarily no relation to himself are imagined to be maliciously directed against him. If two nations harmonize their policies and abolish their antagonisms, it seems to the Kaiser's mind that they have combined against him. If Edward VII shows friendship for France, he is set down as a "mischief-maker." If he has a friendly visit with the Czar of Russia, he is plotting an "encirclement." If the United States of America exercises its rights of neutrality in accordance with definite principles of international law which have not previously been challenged, and which the German Empire has upon occasion itself regarded as properly regulative of neutral conduct, the Kaiser informs the ambassador that he "will stand no nonsense after this war," and that "America had better look out."

The truth is, nearly all international matters are considered by William II merely as questions of power and not as questions of right in any abstract and universal sense. They are not only questions of power, but questions to be settled by will and not by reason. "*Sic volo, sic jubeo*," he wrote on a portrait presented to one of his ministers in 1890. It is the key to the Kaiser's character. He himself has asserted it.

"Every prince of the house of Hohenzollern," he said, at the inauguration of a statue of the Great Elector at Bielfeld, "has always a consciousness that he is only a mandatory on the earth, that he must render an account of his labor to a supreme

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King and Master, and that he should faithfully accomplish the task that has been committed to him by an order from on high. Thence comes that conviction, firm as a rock, that all my ancestors have had of their mission. Thence their inflexible will to accomplish that which they have once proposed. . . . In spite of all resistance, I shall always invariably continue in the way which I shall once have recognized to be good."

But this declaration of inflexibility of will throws no new light on the real basis of judgment. Plainly it is merely personal, with a chance that it is chiefly emotional. Whence come these orders from on high? And in what form? Evidently they are mere subjective impulses. They have no substantial authority. They are derived neither from experience nor from reasoning. They base government, in so far as the Kaiser is concerned, squarely upon personal inspiration.

The fatal element in this method of treating great matters is, that when a decision is once made it becomes an act of God. The Kaiser conceives of himself as an "instrument" under divine direction. If success follows, he seems to have a new evidence of the soundness of his theory. If failure follows, it is merely a divine "delay"; or, perhaps, a "lesson" needed by his people! That there is anything essentially "wrong," or that there is any personal "guilt," in a decision made in this manner the Kaiser's theory does not admit. He is without responsibility to men, for he acts as God's instru-

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ment. Even his responsibility to God, on the inspirational theory, is limited; for his duty consists merely in carrying into execution what God puts into his mind! That millions of men should perish, that millions of homes should be made desolate, that faith in solemn public promises should be rendered impossible in the future, are matters with which, on William II's theory, it is unnecessary to concern ourselves. Whatever happens is God's will, and God's will must be right!

This total effacement of all moral distinctions that can be subjected to any intelligent test renders impossible any form of international security. I would not be understood as affirming that the Kaiser alone, or even the Kaiser and his adherents, are the only obstructions to the world's peace; but I venture to affirm that the theory of international relations which the Kaiser holds and inculcates, and especially his unwillingness to permit great decisions to be openly and frankly discussed in a judicial spirit, has prolonged the anarchy from which civilization has been trying to emerge and has finally plunged the world into the most terrific war known to history. He treats the grave issues of war and peace as they were treated by the primitive despots of the early Oriental monarchies. To him they are merely questions of power, which can be settled only by war, and not questions of right, which are susceptible of being regulated by law.

With Germany always in a warlike mood and the Kaiser's hand always on the hilt of his sword, in

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spite of repeated professions of peace, defensive preparation for war by other European nations has been made necessary; and yet, as we now know, it has not been sufficient to secure immunity from Germany's predatory designs. Since 1908, to those familiar with the military spirit which William II has developed among his people, it has seemed highly probable that, at some well-chosen moment, without previous intimation, without parliamentary consideration, and without sufficient cause of action, the Kaiser would surprise the world with a sudden declaration of war and an immediate attack upon one or more of his neighbors.

Behind the fortification of the Triple Alliance, Germany has never for a moment had reason to fear an assault. No coalition has ever been formed against her. France, it is true, has never forgiven the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine by Germany, and the enforced Treaty of Frankfort has always been felt as a humiliation; but, by 1908, the French had settled down to a state of passive endurance of what seemed to be an irretrievable loss. Although the cause of resentment could at any time have been wholly removed by the restoration of these provinces torn from the bleeding heart of France, it is doubtful if William II or any considerable portion of the German people ever for a moment seriously considered this solution of the Alsatian problem. The pretense that Alsace-Lorraine is really German, or can ever be made so, is too transparent to produce conviction. The inhabitants of those prov-



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inces have never ceased to protest against German rule. After forty-five years of strenuous efforts at Germanization, it has recently been admitted by the late Paul Laband, the eminent professor of constitutional law in the University of Strasburg, that the natives are still loyally French, and that it would long be necessary to employ compulsion in these conquered provinces. The reason of this persistent devotion to France is not difficult to comprehend. Until the vivisection of the Republic by the excision of these organic parts, the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine had participated in all the revolutions of France and had become flesh of her flesh. They felt that they had never possessed any other freely accepted country. It was not even pretended at the time of annexation that the inhabitants were really German. The fact that German was spoken in Alsace was no better proof of the provinces being natural parts of Prusso-Germany than that the German-speaking cantons of Switzerland or the city of Milwaukee naturally belong to the German Empire. The reason for the annexation was frankly confessed by Bismarck and by William I. It was purely and solely a question of military advantage on the part of the conqueror. For this reason the guns of Metz were directed against France, and they have offered a perpetual challenge to Frenchmen to reclaim their lost territory.

As for Russia, there was never any reason to believe that the Czar would begin an aggressive war upon Germany. With singular abstention, suc-

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cessive rulers of that Empire have passively permitted Prussia to expand her frontiers. They remained complacently neutral during the acquisition of Schleswig-Holstein, the defeat of Austria, and the Franco-Prussian War. Bismarck was so confident of Russia's inertia, unless actually attacked, that he assured the Reichstag, "Russia cannot intend to conquer any Prussian provinces, nor, I believe, any Austrian provinces." And he added, "I even go so far in my confidence as to be convinced that a Russian war would not ensue if we should become involved in a French war because of some explosive happenings in France." Even in the doubtful case of a Franco-Russian combined attack on Germany, which there has never been any sufficient reason to expect, the alliance with Austria-Hungary would have afforded adequate protection to Germany without relying upon aid from Italy.

The conclusive proof of these statements is found in the fact that when, in 1908, Austria-Hungary, in violation of the Treaty of Berlin, annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kaiser William II, as he has publicly boasted, openly defied all the Slav nations at once, and in fact all Europe, by opposing the calling of a conference to consider the subject, and threatened Russia with his appearance "in shining armor" if she did not yield.

For a decade the people of Germany have been taught that a revengeful France, a barbaric and jealous Russia, and an envious Britain were the

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real cause of German military preparations. But no one who has lived in Germany, who has conversed with German officers, and who has read the brutal and inflammatory Pan-German literature, can believe that the purposes of the Imperial Government have been merely defensive. On the contrary, all the evidence shows that the German intentions were not only aggressive, but included detailed plans for the invasion, occupation, and retention of inoffensive countries, with which Germany had no prospect of a quarrel. Even the most moderate German writers on foreign politics have urged the propagation of what they call "the German idea," whatever that may mean, in countries with which Germany was at peace. The German spy system and the German war plans have literally benetted the globe.

In no other country has there ever been published such a mass of literature, ranging from cheap brochures to voluminous treatises, containing definite proposals for the conquest and annexation of other countries. Until war revealed it, the world at large was wholly ignorant of this Pan-German movement, which took shape in 1895 and broadened out immeasurably in 1911.

Although the vigilance of the police is very alert in Germany and the censorship of what is offensive to the Imperial Government is extremely strict, this literature, as far as I can discover, has never been suppressed or even officially condemned. In *Gross Deutschland*, for example, by Otto Richard

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Tannenberg, published at Leipzig in 1911, we have large portions of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America marked on the map for future acquisition by Germany.

“We wish to inaugurate a new era in a new empire,” it is announced, “the supreme law of which will be the following: The essential end of Greater Germany is the profit of Germans. All special laws are only the application of that fundamental law.” . . . “The word ‘peace’ is a detestable word; peace between Germans and Slavs is like a treaty made on paper between water and fire.” . . . “The time of preparation has lasted long enough—forty years of toil on land and sea—the end constantly in view. The need now is to begin the battle, to vanquish, and to conquer; to gain new territories—lands for colonization for the German peasants, fathers of future warriors, and for the future conquests.”

Was the task regarded as difficult? Was Russia an enemy to be feared?

Here is Tannenberg’s answer: “We find ourselves face to face with the definitive dissolution of the power of the Czar. Siberia will become Japanese as far as the Ural. . . . Western Russia, which in other times was called the country of the Knights of the Sword, and Great Lithuania will revolt and seek aid and protection toward the West, toward Germany. The time has come for us to familiarize ourselves with the facts that are developing, for fear that some day we shall be surprised

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by events. . . . The honor of entering into the German Empire, and into its customs union, which dominates our whole life, should be paid for. Alsace-Lorraine has brought us a *dot* of four milliards of marks. That was very pretty, assuredly, but twenty-five milliards would have been better still. There is no money to take in the East, but there is something of greater value than cash; there are lands, lands for colonization by new German peasants." The writer then goes on to speak of the extent and adaption for immigration of Courland, Livonia, and Esthonia; as large as Bavaria and Württemberg together, but with only one-fourth their population.

Holland, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Switzerland are all, in due time, according to Tannenberg, to be brought within the limits of the Empire—an easy task when France is beaten and Russia disintegrated.

As for Great Britain, her colonies, this author thinks, are destined to desert her; and when, finally, her sea-power is destroyed, her possessions, especially her Indian Empire, and all others that Germany desires, will fall to the lot of Germany. To accomplish this result, the Mohammedan world must be utilized by Germany through uprisings and attacks. In the end, Germany is to dominate the earth!

The means for beginning this vast expansion, says this writer, will be a war with Russia and France. With astonishing clairvoyance, the desire

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of Serbia to unite her Slav kindred in Herzegovina and neighboring lands is pointed out. Then Austria mobilizes her troops. What will happen then?

The answer is given thus: "Germany has only one part to take: to send two army corps to occupy Bohemia, Austrian Silesia, and Moravia. . . . The occupation of Prague by the Germans is followed by a declaration of war by France, and the same day Russia declares mobilization. England holds herself in an expectant mood. Business has never gone better in England than when the powers of the European continent engage in war. England will not go in to lose, by declaring for one or the other, an occasion to increase her wealth!"

A marvelous prophecy, indeed; but with a characteristic miscalculation, later to be shared by others who should have been better informed than this writer. And yet, listen to this prediction: "Germany sends against Russia an army of a million of soldiers. The struggle unfolds itself along the Baltic provinces, Great Lithuania and the regions of the Memel, of the Duna, of the Embach, and of the Dnieper. The Russians abandon little by little these territories, which, by their population, are strangers to them, and retire to Moscow. . . . But the German armies do not follow them into the forests and swamps of Russia; they content themselves with occupying territories the acquisition of which we can foresee."

"It is on the West," he continues, "that Germany sends the bulk of her forces. Eight days after the



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declaration of war by France, four millions of German soldiers cross that which has been the eastern frontier of that country. . . . The Russian revolution, which raises its head anew, destroys among the French the *élan* of which they gave evidence in 1870. . . . The fortresses of which the French expect so much can do nothing against the attacks of the German air-ships. They are only bomb-catchers for the poor Frenchmen who are buried in them. . . . Paris does not even try to defend itself. . . . England and America speak of business, but do not offer battles. . . . The Germans besiege St. Petersburg and proclaim the annexation of the regions of the Niemen, of the Duna, and of the Embach. The Germans have occupied Paris and advance toward the line of the Loire. Holland and Belgium have asked to be admitted into the German Empire as confederated states, with all their colonies. The offer is accepted with reserves. Who would think of hindering a victorious Germany from declaring these countries territories of the Empire without conditions? Questions of detail regarding their admission will furnish matter for further discussion at Berlin. One thing is certain, that the colonies of the two states, for motives of public law, should not be the private property of a confederated state, but a colonial territory of the whole Empire.”

Such was the Pan-German program for the German war of expansion in 1911. Even the treaties of peace that were to conclude the war were care-

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fully drawn up at that time. By the imaginary treaty of Brussels, France cedes to Germany the Vosges, with Epinal; Moselle and Meuse, with Nancy and Lunéville; the town of Verdun; and the Ardennes, with Sedan. France further gives asylum to the inhabitants of this territory, and establishes them elsewhere within her own borders, in order to make room for German settlers; declares its assent to the incorporation of Belgium, Holland, Luxemburg, and Switzerland into the German Empire; cedes to Germany the twelve milliards of francs lent to Russia; renounces all colonies; and pays to Germany a cash indemnity of thirty-five milliards of marks. By the supposititious Treaty of Riga, Russia cedes vast territories to Germany; creates a kingdom of Poland on its own soil, where the Prussian Poles, to be expelled from Prussian Poland, may reside; and accepts the incorporation of Austria, ceded by the Hapsburgs to the Hohenzollerns, into the German Empire. As an inducement to Great Britain to sanction these proceedings, the French and Portuguese colonies are by these treaties to be divided between the two empires on the assumption that British neutrality would be thus insured!

Was the Kaiser ignorant of a prediction that dealt so exhaustively with the future of Germany, contained in a book that could be had in any bookseller's shop in Germany in 1911?

In principle it was advocating no greater crimes than those proposed in General Bernhardt's *Ger-*

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*many in the Next War*, published in the same year, in which this officer said, "We can secure Germany's position on the continent of Europe only if we succeed in smashing the Triple Entente and in humiliating France"; of which the Kaiser was certainly not ignorant and which he did not condemn. Nor is it as merciless as Daniel Frymann's *Wenn ich der Kaiser wäre*, also published in 1911, in which the author advocated the annexation of foreign territories, "but without inhabitants!" In truth, *Gross Deutschland* differs from these and many other Pan-German publications chiefly in being more learned, more detailed, and more suggestive to the imagination. In brief, of all the books on Germany's future, it was the one that would be the most interesting to the Kaiser as a program of German policy.

Of course, the Imperial Government assumed no responsibility for any of this literature, and could readily, if complaint were made, have disavowed it. It was, however, too extravagantly outrageous to be taken seriously in 1911 by any one outside of Germany. But at the present time one may not improperly ask, Is there anything in any of these publications that has not, since 1914, been equaled, and even surpassed, in boldness of purpose, in arrogance of temper, in defiance of international law, in predatory design, or in brutality of procedure?

We need not here venture upon any speculation regarding the real origin of the Tannenberg

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schemes, which it was easy at the time to dismiss as the idle lucubrations of an irresponsible and preposterous dreamer. But events compel us to admit that Kaiser William II must be accepted as either the master or the pupil in this school of predatory enterprise which his strident appeals to the inherent right of power had called into being.

With a singular exactness Tannenberg has outlined for us the actual sequence of events in the Great War. The chief spoils were to be obtained from the downfall of a disintegrating Russia. The starting-point of the conflict was to be the ambition of Serbia, against which Austria-Hungary was to mobilize. Russia was to intervene, Germany was to march against Russia, and France was to join in the defense of Russia. Great Britain, however, was to remain neutral, and her neutrality was to be rewarded with a share of the colonial spoils taken from other nations!

With the exception of the miscalculation regarding the neutrality of Great Britain, this prognostication has been literally fulfilled. And here we have to note that, in the mind of the writer, the success of the entire scheme turns on the expected disposition of England to let Germany have her own way in the coming war. The war as planned by Tannenberg is precisely the kind of a war which Kaiser William II, as I shall later prove, admits that he desired and complains that he was prevented by Great Britain from being allowed to wage, a war in which Russia and France, unaided, would

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be placed at the mercy of the combined powers of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Let us, therefore, in brief outline, consider the events which in 1911 gave reason for assigning to Great Britain the rôle assigned to her by Tannenberg, and also the events which afterward rendered Great Britain's attitude problematical to Germany.

The Act of Algeciras of 1906 gave to France, and in a minor degree to Spain, certain rights of police supervision in Morocco. In order to quiet the complaints of Germany that France was exercising political power in Morocco in excess of what was warranted by the Act of Algeciras, on February 9, 1909, by a private agreement made at Berlin, to which the other signatories of the Act of Algeciras were not parties, Germany was allowed special commercial privileges in Morocco in exchange for the recognition by Germany of "the special political interests of France" in that country.

This separate dealing with Germany, while no doubt well intended by France, and perhaps considered necessary to prevent an international crisis, was certainly ill advised; for it exposed France to the alienation of British support, which no doubt was the ultimate design of Germany. Great Britain regarded the granting of special advantages to Germany as contrary to the spirit of the Act of Algeciras; and, early in 1911, Sir Edward Grey protested against it as a step toward a joint German and French economic monopoly in Morocco. Had the protest not been heeded, a rupture of the



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Franco-British *entente* would no doubt have followed.

Here, then, is the German ground for believing, early in 1911, that, in case of a conflict between Germany and Austria-Hungary, on the one side, and France and Russia, on the other, Great Britain could be juggled into neutrality. But from this illusion there was soon to be a rude awakening.

Revolution in Morocco promptly brought about a change in the Franco-German situation. The efforts of the French to restore peace and order, particularly the march of a French army to Fez, aroused the suspicions of Berlin. At noon on July 1, 1911, the German ambassadors were instructed to announce simultaneously to all the powers, by an identic note, that German colonists in southern Morocco "had appealed to the Imperial Government to protect their interests," and that in response the war-ship *Panther* had been sent to Agadir; but this protective mission would end "as soon as the state of affairs in Morocco had resumed its former quiet aspect."

In Berlin the *coup* at Agadir was represented as a merely temporary act of self-protection, but at Paris it was quite otherwise understood. Incidentally, in the course of a libel suit in Germany, in which the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Herr von Kiderlen-Wächter, was a witness, he offered testimony which illustrates the insincerity of Wilhelmstrasse in this incident. He said: "The Pan-German demand for Morocco is absolutely justified.



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You can rely upon it that the government will stick to Morocco. M. Cambon is wriggling before me like a worm. The German government is in a splendid position. You can rely upon me, and you will be very much pleased with our Morocco policy. I am as good a Pan-German as you are.”<sup>1</sup>

On July 1, the Under-secretary of State, Herr Zimmermann, said to a Pan-German visitor at the Foreign Office: “To-day the *Panther* appears before Agadir, and at this very moment (twelve o’clock midday) the foreign cabinets are being informed of its mission. The German government has sent two *agents provocateurs* to Agadir, and these have done their duty very well. German firms have been induced to make complaints and to call upon the government in Berlin for protection. It is the government’s intention to seize the district, and it will not give it up again. The German people absolutely require a settlement colony. . . . Possibly France will offer us the Congo. However, the German government does not want compensation elsewhere, but a part of Morocco.”<sup>2</sup>

This, then, was the result of the private efforts of France to satisfy the demands of Germany. Such a partnership was quickly seen to be impossible, and the *entente* with Great Britain was promptly reinvigorated. Although the parliamentary situation was at the moment very critical for the Liberal government at London, on July 21, 1911,

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by J. E. Barker, *Fortnightly Review*, March, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> The same.

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at a public banquet at the Mansion House, David Lloyd George made a speech that cleared the air, in the course of which he said: "I would make great sacrifices to preserve peace. I conceive that nothing would justify a disturbance of international good-will except questions of the gravest moment. But if a situation were to be forced upon us in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great and beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of heroism and achievement—by allowing Britain to be treated, where her interests are vitally affected, as if she were of no account in the cabinet of nations—then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours to endure."<sup>2</sup>

The note of warning was sufficient. After this, Germany could not, in case of war over the Morocco question, count upon British neutrality.

A few days afterward, on July 27th, the Prime Minister, Mr. Asquith, pointed out a path which Germany might pursue. "The question of Morocco itself," he said, "bristles with difficulties; but outside Morocco, in other parts of West Africa, we should not think of attempting to interfere with territorial arrangements considered reasonable by those who are more directly interested."<sup>1</sup>

The hint was plain and was soon acted upon. So far as Great Britain was concerned, Germany and

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<sup>1</sup> *The London Times*, July 22, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> The same, July 28, 1911.

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France were at liberty to reconcile their differences at the expense of France in the French Congo, if France chose to pursue that course.

The effect at Berlin was immediate. The Imperial Government perceived that it could not hope to wage a successful war against France and Russia unless Great Britain's neutrality could be assured. Until the completion of the broadening of the Kiel Canal so as to pass the largest battleships—which would not be until the summer of 1914—a war with France and Russia that would involve England's opposition could not safely be risked by Germany. Other influences also soon came to be felt. As the war cloud gathered, French bankers began to call their loans in Germany. In Berlin a financial panic threatened to complicate the situation, which induced the Imperial Government to reconsider its pressure for a portion of Morocco. The Hohenzollern dynasty could not afford to engage in an unpopular war. The pretense that such a war was one of "defense," where Germany was so obviously the aggressor, would not satisfy the masses, whose sons might be called upon to perish in battle for a slice of Moroccan territory. As a consequence, in view of England's attitude, the demands of Germany became more moderate.

At Paris, on the other hand, the gravity of the crisis was keenly felt. No one in France wanted war with Germany over the Moroccan situation, but the Imperial Government, in order to save its face by obtaining from France some concessions,

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was exhibiting signs of military movement. The solution, therefore, was found, as Mr. Asquith had suggested it might be, in "other parts of Africa"; and, on November 4, 1911, a peaceful agreement was concluded by the Congo Convention, in which Morocco virtually became a French protectorate, at the price of more than one hundred thousand square miles of territory ceded to Germany in the French Congo, with a guarantee of the "open door" to German commerce in Morocco.

Neither country was satisfied with the bargain. The French felt that they had handed over a purse to a highwayman, and the government was severely criticized. "We possessed an empire," said M. Hanotaux; "they have left us corridors."

In Germany, however, the dissatisfaction was even more intense. There it was felt that the Imperial Government had suffered a humiliating defeat. It had rattled the saber and had been bribed to sheathe it. By the Pan-German party and the military clique, who had hoped that at last the General Staff was to show the results of its training, the settlement was considered a disgrace. The Chancellor and the Secretary for Foreign Affairs were bitterly attacked. When Bethmann-Hollweg declared in the Reichstag that the *Panther* was not sent to Agadir for the purpose of acquiring territory, and that southern Morocco was not really a desirable possession for Germany, he was interrupted with jeers and laughter. Kiderlen-Wächter and Zimmermann were left in a worse plight, for

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they had said the contrary. The unfortunate secretary—who aped Bismarck, whom he slightly resembled in appearance and his attentions to his dog—was quite broken by the ferocity of the attacks upon him. To heighten the invective of the war party, even Kiderlen-Wächter's little dog was made an object of caricature. "An imitation Bismarck, and even the dog a degenerate!"

The reaction from disappointment in Germany left the Pan-German party in a fighting mood. Somewhere, somehow, the loss of German prestige must be regained. As Baron Beyens has well expressed it, "To dream of a colony, rich in natural resources of every kind, and to wake up amid the swamps of the Sanga and the Oubanghi—what a disillusion!"<sup>1</sup>

It was excellent soil for the Bernhardis, the Frymanns, and the Tannenbergs.

In all this commotion the Kaiser had kept in the background. He had taken no part in these negotiations, and as War Lord he had escaped the public wrath. There was, however, in truth, no need to speak of Germany's regaining political prestige in Europe; for, after all, considering the territories extorted from France, Germany's reputation for greed was not seriously impaired in the chancelleries of her neighbors. But in Germany itself the war spirit had been raised to a fever heat, and it was now directed toward Great Britain, whose at-

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<sup>1</sup> Beyens, *Germany Before the War*, London and New York, 1916, p. 238.

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titude had prevented the desired war. The Conservative leader, Herr von Heydebrandt—sometimes referred to in Prussia as “the uncrowned king”—did not hesitate to proclaim it publicly in the Reichstag.

“We know now,” he cried out, “when we wish to expand in the world, when we wish to have our place in the sun, who it is that lays claim to world-wide domination. We shall secure peace, not by concessions, but with the German sword.”<sup>1</sup>

“Peace,” as here comprehended, is a condition in which Germany does what she pleases without obstruction. And this is the sense in which Kaiser William II has always employed this word. For him “peace” is a trophy to be won and preserved by the German sword.

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<sup>1</sup> Cited by Holt and Chilton, *The History of Europe*, New York, 1918, p. 472.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE KAISER'S EFFORTS FOR BRITISH NEUTRALITY

NOT less than the outspoken Pan-German leaders, like Heydebrandt, who had characterized Great Britain as an "enemy," Kaiser William II was dissatisfied with the outcome of the Agadir adventure; but he, with greater perspicacity, resolved to disarm the "enemy" by offers of friendship. Until a more opportune moment for action should arrive, it was, in his opinion, unwise to imperil the Hohenzollern dynasty by a war for German expansion. If Great Britain could be made a partner in some new understanding with Germany, it might be possible, he thought, at the critical moment to obtain British neutrality in a continental war.

Without in the slightest degree modifying his position that international relations should be based upon force alone, he felt obliged to silence the clamor of the Pan-German party, while he devoted himself to readjusting the European balance in such a manner as to give him a free hand for the prosecution of his plans of expansion.

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The task was beset by grave difficulties. During nearly a quarter of a century he had built up, at times against great odds, the most formidable army in the world. He had preached the gospel of the sword. He had fanned into a consuming flame the military spirit. He had boasted of the Hohenzollern conquests that had created Prussia and the Empire. He had promised to lead on to "greater things." He had claimed a divine vocation, and he had construed it as a militant mission which only new conquests could fulfil. He had crushed out parliamentary control of the army. He had never admitted that he was subject to the will of his people. On the contrary, he had desired an apotheosis like that of the Roman Cæsars; and, clothed in shining armor, he had come to be looked upon as he had desired. Having evoked and stimulated to the fighting-point the aspirations of the German people, he must yet sometime work his miracle of glorious conquest or fall into disrepute, perhaps even before death would claim him, as a weakling and an impostor, overwhelmed by the fiery waves of defection and distrust. Having created his rôle, he must play it to the end; but, without aggressive action, the end was very near.

Against France and Russia alone he could at any time, upon a pretext that German rights were in jeopardy, declare and prosecute a successful war. But if Great Britain should intervene, close the seas to his ships, and furnish to his enemies the material and financial aid which her great resources

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could supply, it would be a doubtful combat. In the Kaiser's mind, therefore, a policy of peace was necessary until Great Britain's neutrality in a future continental war could be secured, thereby granting to Germany full liberty of action in the prosecution of territorial expansion. When the German position had been sufficiently established on the Continent, Great Britain could perhaps be successfully challenged on the sea.

In order to open negotiations in the intimate manner for which William II has a predilection, early in 1912, the Kaiser sent, through a personal friend in England, a private message to one of the English Ministers, suggesting a conference between the Cabinets of the two countries. In order to meet the Kaiser's wishes, the British Cabinet selected Lord Haldane, then Lord High Chancellor—whose knowledge of the German language, personal acquaintance with the Emperor, and familiarity with the questions to be discussed fitted him in an extraordinary degree for the mission—to visit Berlin, where he arrived on February 8, 1912. He had a preliminary conversation at the British Embassy with the Imperial Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, on the day of his arrival, and on the next day saw both the Emperor and Admiral von Tirpitz, with whom he conversed in each other's presence.

In the course of the conversations, Lord Haldane stated frankly that the Triple Alliance gave to Germany a great superiority of strength on the

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Continent, and that its military preponderance created a serious situation for the other powers. Attention was called to the growth of the German navy, and the question was plainly put to the Chancellor, whether he thought that its further increase would contribute to more friendly relations. The subject of Germany's naval program was discussed and the possibility of spreading the proposed increments of shipbuilding over a number of years was suggested; but the main issue was the future action of the two countries in case of a continental war.<sup>1</sup>

The proposal of Germany was the absolute neutrality of each country in case the other was engaged in war, binding them not to enter into any combination against each other, but granting to each perfect freedom of action regarding all other nations. This proposal, if agreed to, would leave Germany free to make war at her pleasure, so long as it was in no way directed against Great Britain. It accorded to Great Britain the same privilege, but this could hardly be regarded as a means of insuring a general European peace.

In response, Lord Haldane suggested a mutual understanding by both countries against all aggressive military and naval combinations. This

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<sup>1</sup> An official statement regarding the mission of Lord Haldane was issued by the British Government on August 31, 1915. Lord Haldane's full report of his mission was published officially in May, 1918. Both these documents may be found in *The New York Times Current History*, for July, 1918, pp. 166, 170. See also a statement in *Obstacles to Peace*, Boston, 1917, pp. 32, 33, by S. S. McClure.

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would have excluded all plans of conquest, but this proposal did not meet with the Chancellor's approval.

In the course of the discussions, Lord Haldane pointed out that no arrangement could be entered into with Germany inconsistent with the loyal observance of the peace of France and Russia. He made it plain that Great Britain could enter into no engagement to remain neutral if France were attacked or the neutrality of Belgium violated. He also said that if Germany insisted upon increasing her navy, Great Britain would feel obliged to double Germany's naval estimates.

The purpose of Germany in these negotiations is very clearly disclosed. While apparently acting in the interest of peace, the neutrality insisted upon pointed directly to a coming war. The promise not "to make or prepare to make any (unprovoked) attack upon the other, or join in any combination or design against the other for purposes of aggression, or become party to any plan or naval or military enterprise alone or in combination with any other power directed to such end," seemed perfectly fair, so far as it went. It was, however, rendered apparently too elaborately virtuous by the proposed engagement, "If either of the high contracting parties becomes entangled in a war with one or more powers in which it cannot be said to be an aggressor, the other party will at least observe toward the power so entangled a benevolent neutrality!"

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How easy it was for Germany to become "entangled" in a war in which it could be claimed that it was not "the aggressor" is evident from what happened in 1914, when Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia, Russia undertook to defend Serbia from subjugation by Austria, and Germany, "entangled" by the treaty with Austria, though not technically "the aggressor," was in reality the *vis a tergo* of the war! Read in the light of subsequent events, it would seem that precisely such a case must have been in the mind of the ingenious person who devised this formula; which, in exactly the circumstances that actually occurred in 1914, would bind Great Britain to maintain toward Germany "a benevolent neutrality," even after Belgium and France had been invaded. France, bound by the terms of her alliance with Russia, would have been inevitably drawn into the contest; but Great Britain, having no similar alliance with France, would be morally and legally held by a one-sided engagement with Germany!

I do not doubt that, personally, Bethmann-Hollweg sincerely desired a peaceful arrangement with Great Britain; but the hand that wrote the German formula of engagement to neutrality was directed by a mind that was preparing for war. The project aimed at bound Great Britain to "benevolent neutrality," while leaving Germany free to carry out her schemes of aggression. An innocent mind would not seek such provisions.

When afterward the negotiations were trans-



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ferred to London, and came under the precautionary vision of Sir Edward Grey and the British Foreign Office, the "entangled" nature of the German proposals was too transparent for acceptance. Germany still insisted on complete neutrality, and would make no agreement without it. Grey, on the other hand, would not commit Great Britain to this disloyal attitude toward the other European powers. His attitude was expressed in the formula: "England declares that she will neither make nor join in any provoked attack upon Germany. Aggression upon Germany forms no part of any treaty, understanding or combination to which England is now a party, nor will she become a party to anything which has such an object."<sup>1</sup>

If Germany really wanted a permanent peace, here was the opportunity to offer a similar pledge, and to join in Lord Haldane's suggestion of a mutual undertaking against "all aggressive military and naval combinations," which would have the effect of excluding *all* plans of aggression.

The obstruction to this agreement was that a military party existed in Germany which desired Great Britain's pledge of neutrality, in order that the Pan-Germanist plans regarding France and Russia might, at an opportune moment, be successfully carried into execution. In the eyes of this party, England was an obstacle in Germany's pathway which in some manner must be removed.

"England," Bernhardi, who expressed the aims

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<sup>1</sup> See Report of 1915, above referred to, p. 170.

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of this party, maintained, "would have to give Germany an absolutely free hand in all questions touching European politics, and agree beforehand to any increase of Germany's power on the continent of Europe which may ensue from the formation of a Central European Union of Powers, or from a German war with France. England would have to agree that she would no longer strive to prevent by her diplomacy the expansion of Germany's colonial empire as long as such development would not take place at England's cost. . . . England would, further, have to bind herself that she would not hinder Austria's expansion in the Balkan Peninsula. She would have to offer no opposition to Germany's economic expansion in Asia Minor, and she would have to make up her mind that she would no longer oppose the development of Germany's sea-power by the acquisition of coal-ing-stations. . . . If England in this way approaches the Triple Alliance," he affirms, "European peace would be assured, and a powerful counterpoise would be created to the growing influence of the United States."<sup>1</sup>

It would imply a condition of utter blindness to the meaning of diplomatic purpose not to see that the results just enumerated were the objects aimed at in the Kaiser's efforts to secure British neutrality. With Great Britain neutral, Germany might easily carry out the Pan-German plans. Whether

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<sup>1</sup> Bernhardt's *Britain as Germany's Vassal*, London, 1914; a translation of *Unsere Zukunft*, Stuttgart, 1912.

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they were originally the Kaiser's own plans or not, they were the natural fruits of his military ambitions; and they were the mainspring of Imperial German diplomacy in the conduct of these negotiations for British neutrality.

During the progress of these conversations just enough of them was publicly known to create the impression in many minds that William II was engaged in a noble effort to promote permanent peace. It was at this time that Herr Alfred H. Fried was publishing his book on *The German Emperor and the World Peace*, in which he proclaimed that the Kaiser was the most pacific of all sovereigns.

"Why," he asked, "is the Emperor not being supported in attaining his ends? Why is he not receiving the cordial assistance of public opinion which even an Emperor needs when he wishes to convert ideas into deeds?"<sup>1</sup> But, to Herr Fried's disgust, as he complains, "Some German newspapers recently characterized as an 'impudent calumny' a statement made by the late W. T. Stead to the effect that His Majesty was ambitious of bequeathing to his subjects the memory of a reign which was not stained by a single war."

At this time numerous pilgrimages by groups of clergymen, journalists, and members of Parliament were made to Berlin, in the hope of proving by this manifestation of interest the devotion of Englishmen to a general peace and the disposition in Eng-

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<sup>1</sup> Fried, *The German Emperor and the World Peace*, London, etc., 1912.

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land for a real friendship with Germany. These messengers, of whom it could be truly said that "their feet were shod with the preparation of peace," were courteously received in Germany, and there were even feeble responses in kind; but an impartial observer could not refrain from the conviction that the newspapers referred to by Herr Fried as resenting the imputation of pacifism to the Kaiser had more intimate knowledge than this writer of the real mental attitude of William II. A *rapprochement* with Great Britain the Kaiser, for reasons already stated, no doubt desired; but in all this period of faith and expectation on the part of the workers for a permanent organization of peace, not one word was spoken by the Kaiser to indicate that he was in sympathy with any general plan for this purpose, or even disposed to consider in any manner the substitution of general legal engagements for military domination. For him the only guarantee of peace was still the superior power of the German sword.

The general situation in Europe in 1912, no doubt, confirmed the Kaiser in his resolution to keep his military force intact. Aside from the Moroccan question, there were other intimate relations between Germany and the Mohammedan world. By dexterous diplomacy the German ambassador at Constantinople, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, had managed, at the time of the Young Turk revolution in the Ottoman Empire, in 1909, to establish with the new leaders the same kind of close friend-

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ship which Germany had long enjoyed with the deposed Sultan, Abdul-Hamid. In October, 1911, Italy had begun a long-meditated war with Turkey by the occupation of Tripoli for the enforcement of long-delayed reforms which implied the conquest of the country. By this conflict between Italy, Germany's ally, and Turkey, of whom the Kaiser was posing as the friend and protector, Germany was placed in a position of extreme embarrassment. The situation was further complicated by Italy's decision, since she could not end the war definitively in Tripoli, on account of the Arab methods of warfare, to risk the intervention of Europe, by extending the war to the Turkish islands, and even blockading the coast of Syria. At the same time, Europe was taken by surprise by the formation of the Balkan League, which threatened the total expulsion of the Ottoman régime from Europe and foreboded the establishment of a Balkan Confederation that would forever bar the progress of Austro-German control in the peninsula. For Germany to oppose by force the procedure of Italy, however, would be to destroy the Triple Alliance. To aid her against Turkey, on the other hand, would be to lose the friendship of the Turks, on which the Kaiser was relying, not only for the completion and control of the Bagdad Railway scheme, which was intended to connect Hamburg with the Persian Gulf, but for the military aid which Prince von Bülow has informed us Germany was then counting on in the next European war.

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For every reason, therefore, it was Germany's policy to remain inactive, while awaiting that disposition of affairs which would render opportune the execution of the Pan-German plans.

This situation was, in effect, continued, even after the Peace of Lausanne, of October 18, 1912, between Italy and Turkey—brought about through the influence of Germany in her anxiety to end the conflict before the destiny of the Ægean islands might call for the intervention of the other European powers. The cause of this continuation was the breaking out of the first Balkan War.

As early as February, 1912, a league had been formed between Bulgaria, Greece, Montenegro, and Serbia for the expulsion of the Ottoman Empire from Europe and the reorganization of the Balkan Peninsula upon national lines.

As such a division of the territory intermediate between Austria-Hungary and Turkey in Asia would frustrate the Austro-German schemes of territorial and economic development, a joint effort was put forth to prevent "any modification of the territorial *status quo* in European Turkey"; but the proclamation of this purpose, by agreement of the powers, on October 8, 1912, was too late. War between the Confederation and Turkey, begun on that same day by Montenegro, on the 15th had been declared by all the confederated states.

If Germany and Austria-Hungary had entered into that war to preserve the integrity of Turkish dominion in Europe, they would have encountered



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the opposition of Russia, as well as of the Balkan states, and other powers might have been drawn into the conflict. Under these circumstances the occasion was not promising for Austro-German success, for all the Balkan powers, with the exception of Rumania, were in the league. How formidable and how unexpected this Balkan combination was is shown by the surprise which the activity of the new Confederation created at Berlin.

"I dined at Kiderlen-Wächter's," writes the Belgian Minister in Berlin, "on the evening when news was brought him of the Turkish defeat at Kirk-Kilisseh. No words of mine can paint his amazement. He almost refused to believe that a fortified position, held by excellent troops, should have been carried in a few hours by an army of peasants."<sup>1</sup>

Before the opportune moment for German action in the Balkans could arrive, it was evidently necessary to divide the Confederation and win over to the Austro-German interests a part at least of the Balkan states.

In the beginning there had been no doubt in Germany that the Balkan War would be of short duration and result in the defeat and dissolution of the Confederates. The ground of this belief was the fact that the Turkish army had been trained and reorganized by German officers and liberally supplied with German equipment, while the army of the Confederation consisted in levies of untrained

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<sup>1</sup> Beyens, *Germany Before the War*, London, etc., 1916, p. 250.

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men. It was a surprise, however, when it was ascertained that its combined forces numbered 650,000 men, animated by a resolute determination to emancipate their fellow-Christians from Turkish rule and to organize the Balkan Peninsula on the basis of nationality. Before the month of October had ended the great battles of the war had been fought and won by the allied armies, and the Turks had been driven within a small area near Constantinople.

At this point the Turkish government appealed to the great powers for mediation, and on December 12, 1912, the ambassadors of these powers united in a conference at London for this purpose, while the plenipotentiaries of the belligerents at the same time assembled to begin negotiations for peace under their auspices. The Balkan uprising had then become a European question, in which all the great powers had an interest.

The danger of a general European conflict over the settlement was serious. An opportunity was presented to solve permanently the Balkan problem by organizing on just lines this turbulent area of national rivalries, but this required the assent of all the powers. A just reorganization could be accomplished only by giving to each of the rival nationalities such frontiers and such access to the great international waterways as its future economic prosperity demanded. In brief, what was needed was a peace based upon fundamental principles of justice, and not upon the will and ambi-

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tions of the great powers called upon to outline the conditions of peace.

Serbia had taken possession of Durazzo, which gave her access to the sea, and she declined to surrender it. To the retention of this seaport by Serbia Austria-Hungary stoutly objected, and began the mobilization of her troops. "A territorial increase of Serbia represents an immediate danger to Austria-Hungary," it had been declared, "and the monarchy must hinder it." If Serbia should bar the way to the future southward expansion of the Dual Monarchy by a continuous extension of territory, including a port on the Adriatic, the Austro-German plans for the future would thereby be frustrated.

The complete solidarity of Germany and Austria regarding the Balkan question soon became evident. Any permanent settlement that would bar the Austro-German plans for future southward expansion would be opposed. While Austria-Hungary was mobilizing an army to prevent the Serbian retention of Durazzo, Germany, through Bethmann-Hollweg, announced that if a third power undertook to prevent a member of the Triple Alliance from defending its interests, Germany would support her ally. With this aid Austria-Hungary carried her point in the conference, the tribesmen of Albania were constituted into a separate state, with a German prince as sovereign, and Serbia was shut off on every side from the sea.

Here was planted the seed of another war. The

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original Balkan alliance had assured Durazzo to Serbia, for which she had agreed to surrender Macedonia to Bulgaria; but, now that Durazzo was denied her, a quarrel with her neighbor arose over the assignment of territory, and before the Treaty of London was signed, on May 30, 1913, the Bulgarians, Serbs, and Greeks were contesting the division of territory. Rumania now entered upon the scene and demanded territorial compensation. On August 10, 1913, the Treaty of Bucharest was concluded, by which Rumania acquired the territory she desired at the expense of Bulgaria, Greece obtained Salonika, and Serbia preserved the part of Macedonia she had claimed. In the mean time, Turkey had taken advantage of the situation to win back from Bulgaria about twice what the Treaty of London had assigned her. The great powers, fearing to precipitate further conflict, withheld their hand, and the Balkan Peninsula was left nominally at peace, but in reality as a fertile seed-plot for future strife. As we now know from the revelations of the Italian Prime Minister of that time, Signor Giolitti, when the Treaty of Bucharest was signed, in 1913, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office invited Italy to be a party to an attack on Serbia.<sup>1</sup> Italy refused; but the moment for executing this project only awaited a favorable opportunity.

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<sup>1</sup> Statement of Signor Giolitti on December 5, 1914, in the Italian Chamber of Deputies. The text is given in Gauvin, *Les Origines de la Guerre Européenne*, Paris, 1915. Also in Scott, *A Survey of International Relations*, etc., New York, 1917, p. 42.

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In the mean time, the Balkan situation having been glided over without a European conflict, the policy of preparing for a German war of expansion by securing the assurance of British neutrality went steadily on.

Unable to obtain a free hand to carry on war, with the assurance of non-intervention on the part of Great Britain, which the Kaiser had sought to procure at the time of Lord Haldane's mission, the aim of Germany now was, not to secure a permanent general European understanding, in which all should participate, but by a process of private bargaining to obtain the acquiescence of Great Britain in Germany's predominance in continental affairs.

The plans of operation were skilfully devised. In 1912, Baron Marschall von Bieberstein, who had so ably carried out the policy of Germany at Constantinople, was transferred as ambassador to London; but, after a few months' residence, he died on September 24th of that year.

The reputation of Von Bieberstein as a crafty opponent of British interests in the East was well known in London, and the British Foreign Office was proportionately wary of his procedure. Not improbably the German Foreign Office became conscious of this disadvantage; at all events, in selecting his successor the choice fell upon a man of an entirely different stamp. If Baron Marschall has left memoirs, it is not impossible that the world may some day know under what instructions he was acting during his short residence in London. In

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the case of Prince Lichnowsky, however, who succeeded him, confidential records, designed only for his family archives, have been made public, and we have from this authentic German source an explicit statement, not only regarding the manner in which his mission was conducted and the spirit in which it was received on the part of the British officials, but of the disillusionment he experienced when he finally discovered the real purposes of his own government, of which he had been made the unconscious instrument.<sup>1</sup> The story of the ambassador pours a stream of white light upon the German preparations for the Great War which dissipates completely the obscurity in which well-known facts, otherwise indisputably established, were partially enshrouded until this unexpected revelation of the Kaiser's secret diplomacy made them clear.

Baron Marschall, Prince Lichnowsky affirms, had employed his declining strength in trying "to convince the English of the harmless character of our fleet, efforts which naturally had no result except to strengthen an entirely opposite impression." What was needed at London, the Imperial Foreign

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<sup>1</sup> The memorandum of Prince Lichnowsky and the reply to it issued by Herr von Jagow, Imperial German Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, have been published in the United States, first in the *New York Times* and its *Current History* for May and June, 1918, and subsequently in book form under the titles, *The Guilt of Germany*, Putnam's, New York, 1918; *My Mission to London*, with preface by Gilbert Murray, Doran, New York, 1918; and *The Disclosures from Germany*, American Association for International Conciliation, New York, 1918. This last contains the German text, with a translation on the opposite page by Professor Monroe Smith, with an introduction and notes by Monroe Smith and Henry F. Monroe.



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Office apparently saw, was British faith in German sincerity. To secure it, Prince Lichnowsky, a country gentleman who had been quietly living on his estates in Silesia for eight years since he had held office in the diplomatic service, and was wholly ignorant of the Kaiser's secret purposes, was sent to London. This highly honorable and chivalrous gentleman, whose acquaintance I made during his brief visits to Berlin in the court season, came to his new task with an innocent mind and all good intentions. Gentle and kindly in his character, he was precisely the man to represent in good faith Germany's desire for a loyal *rapprochement* with Great Britain. Personally he desired it and firmly believed in its possibility. Knowing nothing of ulterior designs, he could not do otherwise than impress the British Government with the sincere friendliness which he personally felt, and which it was his mission to create.

"When I came to London in November, 1912," says the Prince, "anxiety regarding Morocco had subsided, for in Berlin, in the mean time, an agreement had been reached with France. Haldane's mission had indeed failed, because we demanded a promise of neutrality instead of contenting ourselves with a treaty which was to insure us against British attacks and attacks with British support.

"Sir Edward Grey, however, had not given up the idea of coming to an understanding with us, and made such an attempt first in the colonial and economic fields. . . .

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“The moment was undoubtedly favorable for a new effort to establish better relations with England. Our enigmatic policy in Morocco had repeatedly shaken confidence in our peaceful intentions; it had at least aroused the suspicion that we did not quite know what we wanted or that our purpose was to keep Europe on edge and, on occasion, to humiliate the French. An Austrian colleague, who had been long in Paris, said to me: ‘If the French begin to forget *la revanche*, you regularly remind them of it by a good hard kick or two.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

With Germany speaking at London in conciliatory tones through Prince Lichnowsky, it must have appeared to the British Government that Germany was almost penitent for the rudeness of its past. As regards Balkan affairs also, the honest independence of the ambassador must have inspired confidence in the Kaiser’s Eastern policy.

“At that time,” he writes, “the first Balkan War had led to the collapse of Turkey and, consequently, to a defeat of our policy, which for years had tied itself up with the Turks. Now that European Turkey was past saving, two possible courses were open to us as regarded the settlement of its estate. Either we declared that we were in no wise interested in the determination of boundaries in the Balkan Peninsula, and left their adjustment to the Balkan peoples, or we supported our allies, pursued a Triple Alliance policy in the East, and thus abandoned the rôle of mediator. . . .

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith’s translation, pp. 27, 33.

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“The salient point was the Albanian question. Our allies desired the establishment of an independent state of Albania, because Austria was unwilling to permit the Serbs to gain access to the Adriatic, and Italy did not wish the Greeks to push their boundary to Valona, or even to the north of Corfu. On the other hand, Russia, as is known, favored the Serbian, and France the Greek, desires.

“My advice was to consider this question as one lying outside the alliance, and to support neither the Austrian nor the Italian desires. Without our support, however, the Albanian state, whose incapacity to exist might have been foreseen, could not possibly have been established. Serbia would have pushed forward to the sea, and the present world war would have been avoided.”<sup>1</sup>

How little the ambassador understood the ultimate purposes of the Kaiser, as since revealed, this passage most clearly demonstrates. It was, perhaps, not intended that he should know more than was sufficient for the special part he was to play, namely, to obtain an entirely free hand for Germany on the Continent by winning the entire confidence of Great Britain. In this a knowledge of the Kaiser's real designs would be only an embarrassment.

“I was kept in complete ignorance of the most important matters,” he writes, “and I was restricted to sending unimportant and tiresome reports.”

How well all this served the designs of the Imperial German Government, in the conferences of the

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, pp. 35, 37.

## EFFORTS FOR BRITISH NEUTRALITY

ambassadors in London during the progress of the Balkan Wars, is evident. Under the mask of Lichnowsky's good-will and unconscious ignorance of the collusion between Germany and Austria-Hungary, the Kaiser's aims were completely concealed. And the Prince has recorded his amazement when, later, he discovered that avoiding a war with Russia was not the aim of German policy!

Prince Lichnowsky's account of the part he played in the general conferences of the ambassadors in London during the Balkan commotions is most enlightening. What renders it of the highest importance is that it was exactly the rôle he was apparently intended to play by his own government. Incidentally, moreover, he pays a high tribute to the good faith and conciliatory conduct of the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Sir Edward Grey.

"Soon after my arrival in London," he writes, "at the close of the year 1912, Sir Edward Grey suggested an informal discussion to prevent a European war from growing out of the Balkan War. We had, unfortunately, already declined the request of the French government, made at the outbreak of the war, to join in a declaration of disinterestedness. From the outset the British statesman took the position that England had no interest in Albania and therefore did not mean to let war come on this issue. It was his purpose simply to act as a mediator, an 'honest broker,' between the two groups, and to try to smooth away

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difficulties. Accordingly, he by no means placed himself on the side of his Entente associates; and during the negotiations, which lasted some eight months, by force of his good-will and his controlling influence, he made no slight contributions to an understanding. Instead of taking a position like the English, we invariably defended the point of view which was prescribed to us by Vienna. Count Mensdorff led the Triple Alliance in London, I was his second. My task was to support his proposals. In Berlin it was the shrewd and experienced Count Szögyenyi who ran the affair. His refrain was: 'Here the *casus fœderis* comes in'; and when, on one occasion, I ventured to dispute the correctness of this conclusion, I received a serious warning on the ground of my 'Austrophobia.' It was also asserted, alluding to my father, that I was under an 'hereditary burden.'

"On every issue—Albania, a Serbian harbor on the Adriatic, Skutari, and in drawing the boundaries of Albania—we took the point of view of Austria and of Italy, while Sir Edward Grey almost never supported that of France or of Russia. On the contrary, in most instances he lent his support to our group, in order to give no pretext for war, such as was subsequently furnished by a dead archduke. It was thus with his help that we succeeded in coaxing King Nicholas out of Skutari. Otherwise the World War might have been started on this question, since we surely would not have ventured to urge our ally to make any concession.

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“Sir Edward Grey conducted the negotiations with prudence, calmness, and tact. As often as a question threatened to become complicated, he suggested a formula of agreement that met the case and was invariably accepted. His personality won him equal confidence among all who took part in the conference.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, pp. 47, 49.



## CHAPTER IX

### THE KAISER'S DOUBLE DIPLOMACY

THERE were between Germany and Great Britain several concrete causes of misunderstanding which it was well to remove by frank negotiation. This was, in fact, a necessary preliminary to any real friendship. With perfect sincerity, just as disputes with France had been ended in 1904, and with Russia in 1907, the British Government was ready to meet the demands of Germany, and thus widen the circle of the Entente by including Germany in it.

There were three matters regarding which the relations of the two countries needed adjustment. First of all, Germany, considering herself, as a great power, entitled to colonies, desired to have a free hand in acquiring them. Secondly, in pursuing her program of economic expansion in the East she had obtained valuable concessions from Turkey, not only for the building of the Bagdad Railway, but for special industrial and commercial advantages which Great Britain considered too exclusive. Thirdly, in order to carry out her colonial and economic projects regardless of the opposition

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of Great Britain, Germany had enlarged her navy to an extent that created anxiety in England.

Seeing in these aspirations a formidable rival to British interests, Great Britain in 1912 had come to regard the German Empire with suspicion, if not with sentiments of hostility, for which the occasional bellicose pronouncements of the Kaiser and Germany's growing military and naval preparations seemed to offer justification. To Germany, on the other hand, Great Britain appeared to present an obstacle to the realization of her ambition for expansion; and the reconciliation of British with French and Russian interests was interpreted, not as progress toward a general European understanding and peaceful relations, but, in effect, as a menace and an "encirclement."

When, therefore, the Kaiser showed an inclination to consider with the British Government what measures could be adopted as means of a *rap-prochement*, this step was welcomed and applauded in England as evidence of a changed intention on the part of Germany. For a time it appeared as if a bridge between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente was about to be constructed which might ultimately lead to a general result of immense importance.

The spirit in which these negotiations were conducted by the British Government is thus described by Prince Lichnowsky:

"The object of the negotiations between us and England, which had begun before my arrival, was

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to revise and amend our treaty of 1898, which contained a number of impracticable provisions, even as regarded geographical delimitation. Thanks to the conciliatory attitude of the British Government, I succeeded in giving to the new treaty a form which entirely corresponded to our wishes and interests. All Angola, as far as the 20th degree of longitude, was assigned to us, so that we reached the Congo territory from the south. Moreover, the valuable islands of San Thomé and Príncipe, which lie north of the equator and therefore really belonged to the French sphere of interest, were allotted to us—a fact which caused my French colleague to enter energetic but unavailing protests.

“Further, we obtained the northern part of Mozambique; the Licango formed the boundary.

“The British Government showed the utmost readiness to meet our interests and wishes. Sir Edward Grey intended to prove his good-will to us, but he also desired to promote our colonial development as a whole, because England hoped to divert the German output of energy from the North Sea and Western Europe to the ocean and to Africa. ‘We don’t want to grudge Germany her colonial development,’ a member of the Cabinet said to me. . . .

“The treaty was substantially complete at the time of the King’s visit to Berlin in May, 1913. At that time a discussion took place in Berlin, under the presidency of the Imperial Chancellor, in which

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I took part, and at which some further desires of ours were defined. On my return to London I succeeded, with the help of the counselor of the embassy, Herr von Kühlmann, who was working with Mr. Parker upon the details of the treaty, in putting through our last proposals also; so that in August, 1913, before I went on leave, Sir Edward Grey and I were able to paragraph the entire treaty.

“At this point, however, new difficulties were to arise, which prevented the signing of the treaty; and it was only a year later, shortly before the outbreak of war, that I was able to obtain authorization for its definite conclusion. But it never reached the point of being signed.”<sup>1</sup>

A double reason is given why the signature of the treaty was postponed. Sir Edward Grey, the ambassador reports, was unwilling to sign unless the treaty was published, together with the two previous treaties of 1898 and 1899, on the ground that England was not willing to conceal her binding engagements. He was, however, disposed to sign if publication were not deferred beyond one year.

Objections were raised by the Imperial German Foreign Office, the ambassador affirms, on the ground that “the publication would imperil our interests in the colonies.” This excuse having been shown to be unfounded, a new one was invented, to the effect that the publication “might

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, pp. 61, 65.

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jeopard the position of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, because it would be proof of British hypocrisy and perfidy!"

Notwithstanding "ever fresh proposals concerning publication," continues Liechnowsky, in repeated conversations with Sir Edward Grey, the Berlin Foreign Office "remained obstinate"; . . . "so the treaty, which gave us extraordinary advantages, and was the result of more than one year's work, perished," the ambassador concludes, "because it would have been a public success for me."

While this manifestation of personal sensibility on the part of Prince Liechnowsky does not diminish the substantial value of his account, which is unaffected by the question whether the true reason for Germany's indifference to the treaty he had elaborated was or was not based on personal grounds, there is, in fact, quite a different interpretation, in the light of other events, to be placed upon Germany's hesitation to sign the treaty. One thing was still lacking to it; and there was, therefore, from the German point of view, reason for further negotiation, namely, to obtain, if possible, as the crown and final triumph of it the "benevolent neutrality" of Great Britain, in case of continental complications. In the mean time, as we shall see, the Kaiser was engaging in other conversations and was forming plans not yet ripe for discussion, which the attitude of Great Britain might profoundly affect.

In close connection with the African question,

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that of the Bagdad Railway also was being discussed at London.

“After we had drawn into conference a representative of Turkey, Hakki Pasha, all the economic questions connected with the German enterprises were regulated, in substantial accord with the desires of the German Bank. The most important concession made to me personally by Sir Edward Grey was the prolongation of the railway to Basra. This particular object had been abandoned, on our part, in favor of a connection with Alexandretta. Up to this time Bagdad formed the terminus of the line. Navigation on the Shatt-el-Arab was to be placed under an international commission. We were also admitted to participation in the Basra harbor works and, in addition, we obtained rights in the navigation of the Tigris, which had been previously a monopoly of the firm of Lynch.

“By virtue of this treaty all Mesopotamia as far as Basra became our sphere of interest, without prejudice to older British rights in the navigation of the Tigris and in the Wilcox irrigation works. Our sphere further included the whole region of the Bagdad and Anatolian Railway.

“The British economic domain was to include the coasts of the Persian Gulf and the Smyrna-Aidin line; the French, Syria; the Russian, Armenia. Had these two treaties been executed and published, an understanding with England would have been reached which would forever have dissipated all



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doubts as to the possibility of an Anglo-German co-operation.”<sup>1</sup>

There is, indeed, little doubt that, if this treaty could have been honorably executed and strictly observed, as a supplement to the Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian understandings of a like character, Europe would have entered upon a period of reassurance regarding peace. Russia had already, in 1910, during the Czar's visit to Potsdam, shown a favorable disposition by withdrawing previous opposition to the Bagdad Railway, and in 1911 had signed an agreement in which Germany had recognized Russian commercial interests in Persia, and Russia had arranged to connect with the German railway the Russian railroads in northern Persia.<sup>2</sup> The causes of anxiety regarding naval armament having been thus to a great degree removed, the prospect of overcoming even that element of discord was considerably improved. In the early summer of 1914, therefore, all the surface indications seemed to point toward an era of good understanding.

Did Germany's part in these negotiations mark the final abandonment of the Pan-German plans,

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, pp. 71, 73. For the provisions of the treaty regarding the Bagdad Railway see also a document corrected and approved by the Imperial German Foreign Office, published by McClure, *Obstacles to Peace*, pp. 41, 42. He cites further from the speech of the Chancellor, December 2, 1914, "This understanding was to lessen every possible political friction. The world is wide. There is room enough for both nations to measure their strength in peaceful rivalry as long as our national strength is allowed free scope for development."

<sup>2</sup> See Holt and Chilton, *History of Europe*, p. 535.

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or was it intended, by a *rapprochement* with Great Britain, through a removal of outstanding disagreements, to secure from her, when all differences were adjusted, that neutrality in a future war of expansion on the Continent which had been sought at the time of Lord Haldane's mission, but which Germany had then failed to procure?

The true answer to this question is found in the fact that there were two parties in Germany pursuing quite opposite policies. One of these, the evidence seems to show, hoped to win for Germany the objects of her ambition in the colonial and economic sphere through diplomacy; the other intended to obtain them in more ample measure through military action. The former was inspired by the more moderate views and pacific temperament of Von Bethmann-Hollweg and the Foreign Office, the latter by Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz, the military caste, and the Pan-Germanists.

What, then was the attitude of Kaiser William II?

This question must be answered by the evidence derived from the course of events and the testimony of competent persons regarding the Kaiser's part in them. It is, however, important to remember that, during these negotiations, and after they were concluded, William II gave no indication that he had even for a moment abandoned his lifelong theory that the peace of Europe depended upon Germany's readiness for war, or his purpose to secure from Great Britain her "benevolent neu-

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trality," in case war should develop on the Continent. On the contrary, we have, as we shall see, the Kaiser's own written complaint that Great Britain did not finally accord to him the neutrality he had expected, and which up to the very moment when war was declared by him he believed he had, in effect, secured.

Upon the point whether or not William II was meditating future war during the period when the negotiations with Great Britain were peaceably proceeding, we could hardly expect to have better evidence than that derived from the activity of Germany in preparing for a conflict for which no reason existed, except the Pan-German plans of aggression and expansion, which had never been abandoned. During all these negotiations the Kaiser was actively preparing for war. On March 18, 1913, a new army bill was submitted to the Reichstag. The reason given for it was the commotion in the Balkans, and especially the successes of the Balkan states; but it had been long before in contemplation, and the war material for which this new appropriation was to pay had already been ordered at Krupp's. When the French, alarmed at Germany's increase of her army, with difficulty passed the law requiring of her recruits three years of service instead of two, an attempt was made in Germany, through the press, to make the German people believe that the increase in the French army was the reason for the German army bill. In the mean time, the strategic railroads lead-

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ing into Luxemburg and Belgium were the objects of renewed attention. On July 23, 1913, the new German Imperial and state citizenship law—providing that Germans might retain German citizenship after acquiring citizenship in other countries—was proclaimed by the Emperor to go into effect on January 1, 1914, simultaneously with a revision of the Imperial law regarding liability to military service. On August 9, 1913, Austria-Hungary was making her secret proposal to Italy to join in an attack upon Serbia, and received Italy's refusal to recognize the *casus fœderis*. It is incredible that this proposal would ever have been made without the previous assent of Germany.

“After Agadir,” writes the Belgian Minister to Germany, “William II came to regard a war with France as inexorably decreed by Fate. On the 5th and 6th of November, 1913, the King of the Belgians was his guest at Potsdam, after returning from Lüneburg, where he had paid his usual courtesy visit to the regiment of dragoons of which he was Colonel. On this occasion the Emperor told King Albert that he looked upon war with France as “inevitable and close at hand.” ”<sup>1</sup>

The Chief of the General Staff, General von Moltke, is reported to have used the same blustering language to the Belgian military attaché. “We must throw overboard,” he is reported to have said before some of his own countrymen, “all the stock commonplaces about the responsibility of the

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<sup>1</sup> Beyens, *Germany Before the War*, pp. 36, 37.

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aggressor. As soon as there is a ten-to-one chance in favor of war, we must forestall our opponent, commence hostilities without more ado, and mercilessly crush all resistance.”

Not only was war at that time regarded by the Emperor himself as “inevitable and close at hand,” but a passage through Belgium in order to attack France was in his mind.

“What would you do,” he asked of King Albert, upon this occasion, “if my troops entered Belgium?”

“I would do my duty,” replied the King.<sup>1</sup>

In reporting this conversation to the French Foreign Office, in his despatch of November 22, 1913, M. Cambon, the French ambassador at Berlin, writes: “This conversation, it appears, has made a profound impression upon King Albert. I am in no way surprised at the impression he gathered, which corresponds with what I have myself felt for some time. Enmity against us is increasing, and the Emperor has ceased to be a friend of peace.”

In December, 1913, a German military mission was sent to Turkey, and its head, General Liman von Sanders, was named commandant of the army corps at Constantinople; where, in spite of the protest of Russia, the mission remained. Regarded at Constantinople as the personal representative of Kaiser William, Von Sanders was

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<sup>1</sup> The French Yellow Book, No. 6; in Scott, *Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, Part I, p. 554.

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ranked socially above the German ambassador; while Enver Bey, the smart-appearing young Turkish military attaché, whom I knew in Berlin, and who was in effect an agent of Germany, became the Secretary of War of the Ottoman Empire.

Not suspecting the plot that was forming in the East, the British Government, far from exciting Russian resentment of this movement for the domination of Germany at Constantinople, was assiduously endeavoring to induce calm at St. Petersburg.

"When, after a lengthy leave of absence," writes the ambassador, "I returned to London in December, 1913, the Liman von Sanders question had led to renewed tension in our relations with Russia. Sir Edward Grey called my attention, not without anxiety on his part, to the widespread agitation which this matter had aroused in St. Petersburg, saying: 'I have never seen them so excited.'

"I received instructions from Berlin to ask the minister to work in favor of moderation in St. Petersburg and to assist us in settling the dispute. Sir Edward was quite willing to do this, and his mediation contributed in no small degree to smoothing the matter over."<sup>1</sup>

In April, 1914, the Kaiser, after a visit to Vienna, paid a visit to the Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand at Miramar, and again in June at Konopischt, in Bohemia, when he was accompanied by

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<sup>1</sup> It is of interest to note that Liman von Sanders was appointed commander-in-chief of the Turkish army before the Ottoman Empire had entered into the war as a belligerent.



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Grand-Admiral von Tirpitz and Von Moltke, the Chief of Staff of the army. So anxious was William II about the effect upon foreign opinion of this latter visit, with such a retinue, that the German ambassador at London was ordered to reassure the government by asserting that the sojourn with the Austrian Crown Prince had no military object!

Immediate military activity was probably not contemplated during these visits to Francis Ferdinand, although, as heir to the Dual Monarchy, he had acquired great influence in military matters, to which the aged Emperor Francis Joseph gave little attention. We know, however, from words subsequently used by Kaiser William, that at these interviews important confidential relations were established between the Imperial guest and his host.

“Did they, at Konopischt,” asks Baron Beyens, “remodel the map of Europe, assign the mastery of the Mediterranean to the Austro-German squadrons, fix the moment of the great upheaval? The Archduke, so far as one can reach into the soul of this inscrutable prince, seemed to be most eager for war. Yet, by a decree of fate, he did not live to see the accomplishment of the plans that he drew up in cold blood with his guests amid the exquisite gardens of his lordly mansion.”<sup>1</sup>

What was the nature of these plans? There is at present no authoritative answer to this question.

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<sup>1</sup> Beyens, *Germany Before the War*, p. 268.

## THE KAISER'S DOUBLE DIPLOMACY

The Archduke, personally disliked at Vienna, was understood to have entertained a theory that the Dual Monarchy should be transformed into a triple monarchy, in which the Slav peoples would take their place as a constituent member, co-ordinate with Austria and Hungary. A clear understanding with Germany would, no doubt, be necessary to the accomplishment of this plan; which, with certain advantages to Germany, always predominant in every partnership, would appeal strongly to the imagination of William II.

On Sunday, June 28, 1914, at Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, within Austrian jurisdiction, Francis Ferdinand was assassinated, with his morganatic wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg. The crime was committed by a young Serb only eighteen years of age, a native of Herzegovina, after a previous attempt by another intending assassin made on the same day had failed—so ineffective was the Austrian police protection of the Crown Prince. The assassin, having recently, it is asserted, been in Belgrade, although not a Serbian subject, was charged with executing a plot originating in the Serbian capital and inspired by public officials there.

When the news of this tragedy reached Germany the Kaiser was at Kiel. Prince Lichnowsky informs us that he was sailing with him on his yacht the *Meteor* when he first learned what had occurred.

“His Majesty expressed his regrets,” writes the Prince, “that his efforts to win the Archduke over

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to his ideas had been rendered vain. Whether the plan of an active policy against Serbia had already been decided on at Konopischt I am not in a position to know.

“As I was not kept posted regarding views and proceedings in Vienna, I did not attach very great importance to this event. All that I could ascertain later was that among Austrian aristocrats a feeling of relief outweighed other sentiments. On board the *Meteor*, also as a guest of His Majesty, was an Austrian, Count Felix Thun. In spite of the splendid weather, he had remained in his cabin all the time, suffering from seasickness. After receiving the news, however, he was well. Alarm or joy had cured him!”<sup>1</sup>

Others report that the Kaiser turned pale and was heard to murmur, “So my work of the past twenty-five years will have to be started all over again!” To the British ambassador, who was also at Kiel, he is reported to have said, “It is a crime against *Deutschtum*” (*Es ist ein Verbrechen gegen das Deutschtum*).<sup>2</sup>

Whatever may be the true interpretation of these expressions, it is certain that the Kaiser was not only deeply moved by this tragic event, but that it profoundly touched his political plans in the Balkan Peninsula. To those who did not know that plans had been formed, the tragedy did not seem in any intimate way an affair of Germany.

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Beyens, p. 276.

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That plans of some kind had been formed with Francis Ferdinand is evident from the Kaiser's expressions. If they were plans for the peace and self-rule of the Balkan nationalities, the publication of them would only do honor to the Kaiser and to the memory of his friend. Since they have been kept secret, it is perhaps not unreasonable to infer that, notwithstanding the death of Francis Ferdinand, the survivor, who had wished to impress his ideas upon the Crown Prince, has acted as nearly as circumstances permitted in conformity with such plans as they had formed.

If an occasion of war with Serbia was a part of those plans, the tragedy of the assassination itself seemed to furnish it. By throwing the responsibility upon the Serbian Government, a pretext for Austria's declaring war upon that country could readily be found. If, on the other hand, the plans in question contemplated the independence of the Balkan states and justice toward Serbia, the way was open to treat the occurrence, not as an occasion for war, but as a matter for international investigation. Serbia, as a sovereign state, had a right to the determination of her guilt or innocence by the judgment of her peers.

This position, which was claimed in Serbia's behalf by other powers, was not the one taken either by Austria-Hungary or by Germany. Ostensibly, Germany's position was that the whole matter was to be left to Austria-Hungary alone; but it was known from the beginning that Russia

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would not take this view. It was known, further, what the European alliances implied, in case Russia were drawn into war with Austria through efforts for the protection of the small Slav state. Without in the strict sense being the "aggressor," it was evident that Germany might, if the Kaiser so decided, become "entangled" in a continental war, precisely as had been contemplated when, at the time of Lord Haldane's mission, Great Britain's "benevolent neutrality" had been sought if such a case should arise.

If, therefore, there was to be any prospect of obtaining Great Britain's neutrality as the climax of the treaty still waiting to be signed, Germany must not appear as the "aggressor" in any continental war that might occur. The Kaiser did not even go to Vienna to attend the "private" funeral of his friend. Instead, as if entirely detached from the consequences of the tragedy of Sarajevo, early in July he soon vanished from the scene for his usual summer cruise in the fiords of Norway; but, if we accept the testimony offered by those who claim to know, not until after the decision had been reached to invade and humiliate Serbia at whatever cost.

Was there, before the Kaiser's departure for his cruise, as has been asserted, a Crown Council held at Potsdam, on July 5th, at which he decided to pledge the military support of Germany to Austria-Hungary in case of an attempt by Russia to pro-

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tect Serbia from subjugation, under the pretext of avenging the crime of Sarajevo?

The answer to this question, though not strictly vital to the proof of Germany's responsibility for the general European war, is of great interest. The date and results of the alleged Crown Council having been publicly stated in the Reichstag by the Socialist deputy Haase in a criticism of the government, his statement was not declared to be false, but "inexact." It is of interest, however, to find that Prince Lichnowsky confirms Haase's statement, affirming that he learned, not at the time, but "subsequently, that at the decisive conversation at Potsdam, on July 5th, the Vienna inquiry received the unqualified assent of all the controlling authorities, with the further suggestion that it would not be a bad thing if war with Russia should result. At least this statement was made in the Austrian protocol which Count Mensdorff [Austrian ambassador at London] received in London."<sup>1</sup> The American ambassador at Constantinople at that time, the Honorable Henry Morgenthau, has affirmed that he was informed of this Council by his colleague at Constantinople, the German ambassador, Baron Wangenheim, who on July 5th was present at the Council.

"The Kaiser presided; nearly all the ambassadors attended; Wangenheim came to tell of Turkey and enlighten his associates on the situation in Constantinople. Moltke, then Chief of Staff, was there,

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, p. 101.



## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

representing the army, and Admiral von Tirpitz spoke for the navy. The great bankers, railroad directors, and the captains of German industry, all of whom were as necessary to German war preparations as the army itself, also attended.

“Wangenheim now told me that the Kaiser solemnly put the question to each man in turn: Was he ready for war? All replied ‘Yes’ except the financiers. They said that they must have two weeks to sell their foreign securities and to make loans.”<sup>1</sup>

Still more recently we have the testimony of Doctor Wilhelm Mühlön, a former director of the Krupp munition works at Essen:

“In the middle of July, 1914, I had, as I frequently had,” Doctor Mühlön writes, “a conversation with Doctor Helfferich, then Director of the Deutsche Bank in Berlin, and now Vice-Chancellor. The Deutsche Bank had adopted a negative attitude toward certain large transactions in Bulgaria and Turkey, in which the firm of Krupp, for business reasons—delivery of war material—had a lively interest. As one of the reasons to justify the attitude of the Deutsche Bank, Doctor Helfferich finally gave me the following:

“ ‘The political situation has become very menacing. The Deutsche Bank must in any case wait before entering into any further engagements abroad. The Austrians have just been with the Kaiser. In

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<sup>1</sup> Ambassador Morgenthau has given a full account of Baron Wangenheim's conversation with him in *The World's Work* for May and June, 1918.

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a week's time Vienna will send a very severe ultimatum to Serbia, with a very short interval for the answer. The ultimatum will contain demands such as punishment of a number of officers, dissolution of political associations, criminal investigations in Serbia by Austrian officials, and, in fact, a whole series of definite satisfactions will be demanded at once; otherwise Austria-Hungary will declare war on Serbia.'

"Doctor Helfferich added that the Kaiser had expressed his decided approval of this procedure on the part of Austria-Hungary."<sup>1</sup>

Upon his return to Essen, Doctor Mühlon relates, he spoke of this conversation to Doctor Krupp von Bohlen und Halbach, the head of the Krupp firm, who was much disturbed to learn that others knew of the Kaiser's decisions; but, since Doctor Mühlon had this information, Doctor Krupp did not hesitate to state that he personally had it from the Kaiser "that he would declare war immediately if Russia mobilized, and that this time people would see that he did not turn about. The Kaiser's repeated insistence that this time nobody would be able to accuse him of indecision had, he said, been almost comic in its effect."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Mühlon's statements were first printed in the United States in *The New York Times*, and may be found in *Current History* for May, 1918, pp. 20, 22. Dr. Mühlon has since published a diary, *Die Verheerung Europas* (The Devastation of Europe), Zurich, 1918. An English translation has been published in New York by Putnam's, under the title, *The Vandal of Europe*. The full text of Dr. Mühlon's statement in the *Times* is not to be found in the diary.

<sup>2</sup> The same.

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On the very day Helfferich had indicated, July 23d, Doctor Mühlön proceeds, the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia appeared. Being again at this time in Berlin, he declared to Helfferich that the ultimatum—which contained ten stringent demands to be accepted or rejected in forty-eight hours—was “monstrous.”

Helfferich admitted, Doctor Mühlön says, that the Austrians did not expect the ultimatum to be accepted, and were “acting rapidly before the other powers could find time to interfere.” The Deutsche Bank, in view of the existing situation, was paying out no gold. The Kaiser, Helfferich is reported to have said, “had gone on his northern cruise only as a ‘blind’; he had not arranged the cruise on the usual extensive scale, but was remaining close at hand and keeping in constant touch.”

The official defense of the Imperial German Government against the imputations of these witnesses may be summed up in the threat to try Prince Lichnowsky for high treason, and the allegation that Doctor Mühlön is suffering from “nerves.”

An attempt has been made by the former Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Herr von Jagow, to answer the criticisms made by Prince Lichnowsky. To an astonishing degree, this reply confirms the ambassador's assertions. It reveals clearly, and much to the credit of Herr von Jagow, that the Foreign Office, until it was interfered with and finally overruled by military decisions on the

## THE KAISER'S DOUBLE DIPLOMACY

part of the Emperor, was sincerely endeavoring to reach a good understanding with Great Britain, and considered that Germany had been most fairly treated by Sir Edward Grey.

In this document Herr von Jagow does not deny that a Council was held at Potsdam on July 5, 1914, and made a decision for war. He merely states, "On July 5th, I was absent from Berlin." As regards the Kaiser's negotiations with the Archduke Ferdinand, he says, "At Konopischt no plan was laid down (*festgelegt*) for an active policy against Serbia;" but, since it was Von Tirpitz and Von Moltke, and not Von Jagow, who were invited to participate in the Konopischt conferences, his testimony upon this point is of little value. It must not be forgotten that in 1913-14 there were two parties and two policies in Germany: one of which was relying upon diplomatic action, the other upon military action. They were, in reality, as the evidence clearly shows, to the very end of the negotiations, and even after the beginning of the war, antagonistic. The Kaiser, whose boast is that he belongs to no party, made use of both; but it was to the military party rather than to the diplomatic side that he constantly inclined. The Chancellor and the Foreign Office of which he is the head bent before the storm, and finally employed the resources of diplomacy to justify the policy of force which they had ineffectually endeavored to avoid. Thus, Bethmann-Hollweg, Jagow, Zimmermann, and all the adherents of the diplomatic method of securing

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Germany's prestige were finally compelled to serve the cause they had opposed, but which their master had made his own. With perfect honesty, Von Jagow says, in commenting upon Lichnowsky's representations:

"I also pursued a policy which aimed at an agreement with England, because I was of the opinion that this was the only way by which we could get out of the unfavorable situation into which the unequal distribution of strength and weakness of the Triple Alliance had brought us. . . . Our Morocco policy led to political defeat. Happily, this had been avoided in the Bosnian crisis and at the London conference. Fresh diminution of our prestige was intolerable for our position in Europe and in the world. The prosperity of states and their political and economic successes depend upon the prestige which they enjoy in the world."<sup>1</sup>

This was the real consideration that determined the Kaiser's mind to war. It was, in the last analysis, a question of Germany's prestige. This, the Kaiser believed, could be best achieved by war—a war that would prove to Europe, and to all the world, that Germany's strength could sustain the will of Germany's Emperor. It was not war for its own sake that was wanted, but a war that would establish beyond question Germany's predominance. If this could be accomplished by sustaining Austria-Hun-

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<sup>1</sup> See the *Times Current History*, for June, 1918, pp. 541, 545, for Von Jagow's reply.

## THE KAISER'S DOUBLE DIPLOMACY

gary in subjugating Serbia, and thus imposing Teutonic supremacy in the Balkan Peninsula, that, with the alliance of Turkey, would bring to Germany greater advantages than the concessions Great Britain was ready to make regarding economic privileges. The war should, therefore, if possible, be confined to Austria-Hungary and Serbia, with the Kaiser dominating the situation by preventing any interference. If, however, as was probable, Russia should intervene in behalf of Serbia, Germany would appear "in shining armor." If Russia persisted, and France supported her ally, then it would be a war between Germany and France, Austria and Russia. Great Britain must, if possible, be kept neutral. In that case, of which the *rapprochement* already accomplished seemed to afford a promise, a war between Germany and Austria-Hungary on the one side and Russia and France on the other would bring renown to Germany. France was esteemed to be degenerate and on the point of internal revolt. Russia was too bulky to be active, ill prepared for war, and susceptible to revolution.

"At Berlin," says Baron Beyens, "the theory that Russia was incapable of facing a conflict reigned supreme." Herr Krupp von Bohlen, he informs us, who sat at a table near him at the Hotel Bristol, declared, on July 28th, that "the Russian artillery was neither efficient nor complete, while that of the German army had never before been so superior to all its rivals. It would be madness on



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Russia's part, he inferred, to take the field against Germany and Austria under these conditions."<sup>1</sup>

Yet Russia had the courage to protest against the subjugation of the small Slav state. Cautioned to be tractable, Serbia accepted, within the forty-eight hours granted, all of the ten demands made in the Austrian ultimatum, except two, which it was impossible for any state to accept and maintain its independent existence; but even these were not impertinently rejected.

"If the Imperial and Royal Government are not satisfied with this reply," concluded the Serbian response to the ultimatum, "the Serbian Government, considering that it is not to the common interest to precipitate the solution of this question, are ready, as always, to accept a pacific understanding, either by referring this question to the decision of the International Tribunal of The Hague, or to the great powers which took part in the drawing up of the declaration made by the Serbian Government on the 18th (31st) of March, 1909."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Beyens, *Germany Before the War*, p. 286.

<sup>2</sup> For the full text of the Austro-Hungarian Ultimatum of July 23, and of the Serbian reply of July 25, 1914, see Scott, *Documents Relating to the European War*, Part II, pp. 1464, 1468, and pp. 1472, 1476, reprinted from the Serbian Blue Book. See a summary in Illustrative Document No. VII.

In his book, *A Scrap of Paper*, London and New York, 1914, p. 76, Dr. E. J. Dillon affirms that the German Ambassador at Vienna, Tschirschky, not only saw the text of the ultimatum sent to Serbia but telegraphed the wording to the Emperor. He writes: "I advance this statement with full knowledge of what actually took place;" and adds: "The versatile monarch suggested a certain amendment to the time-limit, the alleged object of which was to leave no room for evasion, no loophole for escape." This is in keeping with the Kaiser's twelve-hour time-limit to Russia.

## THE KAISER'S DOUBLE DIPLOMACY

Without further exchange of views, on July 28th, the Austro-Hungarian Government declared war on Serbia.

What was Germany's part in this procedure?

The Imperial German ambassador at London gives the answer:

"1. We encouraged Count Berchtold [the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs] to attack Serbia, although no German interest was involved and the danger of a World War must have been known to us. Whether we were acquainted with the wording of the ultimatum is completely immaterial.

"2. During the period between the 23d and the 30th of July, 1914, when M. Sazonof emphatically declared that he could not tolerate an attack on Serbia, we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, under Russian and British pressure, had accepted almost the whole of the ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points at issue could easily have been reached and Count Berchtold was even prepared to content himself with the Serbian reply.

"3. On the 30th of July, when Count Berchtold showed a disposition to change his course, we sent an ultimatum to St. Petersburg merely because of the Russian mobilization and though Austria had

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For every chance of peace it was invariably made "too late." "Events had marched too rapidly." But time is the first essential of diplomacy. War can be declared in an hour. Peace requires understanding, which demands time for negotiation.

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not been attacked; and on the 31st of July<sup>1</sup> we declared war against the Russians, although the Czar pledged his word that he would not permit a single man to march as long as negotiations were still going on. Thus we deliberately destroyed the possibility of a peaceful settlement.

“In view of these incontestable facts, it is no wonder that the whole civilized world outside of Germany places the sole responsibility for the World War upon our shoulders.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This date should be, of course, the 1st of August.

<sup>2</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, pp. 101, 102.

## CHAPTER X

### THE KAISER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

**I**T is a fact deserving of more consideration than it has hitherto received that, in his own written justification of Germany's action, Kaiser William II does not contradict any one of his ambassador's assertions regarding German responsibility for the war. On the contrary, he offers no defense of his own procedure, except to complain that Great Britain complicated his plans by not observing the neutrality which he had desired and expected. His chief cause of resentment, as stated by himself, is that, instead of adhering to what he deemed a pledge to remain neutral, while Germany and Austria, on the one side, and Russia and France on the other, contended over the fate of Serbia, England, after trying to prevent war altogether, had decided to oppose Germany's plans of attack.

On August 10, 1914, in reply to an offer of mediation by the President of the United States, William II addressed in his own handwriting a personal communication to the President in explanation of his position, beginning with the following statement:

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“1. H. R. H. Prince Henry was received by His Majesty King George V in London, who empowered him to transmit to me verbally that England would remain neutral if war broke out on the Continent involving Germany and France, Austria and Russia.

“This message was telegraphed to me by my brother from London after his conversation with H. M. the King, and repeated verbally on the twenty-ninth of July.”<sup>1</sup>

From a telegram addressed by Prince Henry to King George V, on July 30th, we learn that it was on Sunday, July 26th, that the Prince was received and had his conference with the King at Buckingham Palace.<sup>2</sup> At that time there was no sufficient reason, apart from Germany's ambitions, for believing that a general war would occur on the Continent, involving Germany and France, Austria and Russia. The Austrian ultimatum to Serbia, presented on July 23d, was not answered until 6:30 P. M. of the 25th. Even if the reply was known in London on Sunday, the 26th, its moderation was such that it could hardly cause alarm. The attitude of Austria-Hungary regarding it had not been announced, and there was no reason to expect that it would be a complete rejection. More important

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<sup>1</sup> Reproduced in facsimile in Gerard, *My Four Years in Germany*, New York, 1917, p. 202.

<sup>2</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 1.

The various publications cited in this chapter, such as the British Blue Book, German White Book, Russian Orange Book, etc., may be found in *Collected Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, London, 1915; and also, with additions, in Scott, *Diplomatic Documents Relating to the Outbreak of the European War*, 2 vols., New York, 1916.

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still, Russia had not declared the course to be pursued regarding Serbia. Even on the 27th Russia did not go beyond declaring, "So long as the slightest hope exists of avoiding bloodshed, all our efforts must be directed to that end; but if, in spite of our earnest wish, we are not successful, Russia will in no case disinterest herself in the fate of Serbia."<sup>1</sup>

While Russia was thus eager to prevent war altogether, the Kaiser was endeavoring to obtain an assurance of England's neutrality, in confident expectation of a war in which he anticipated that Germany and France, as well as Austria and Russia, would be engaged. Of the possible prevention of such a war there is in his communication no suggestion.

It is hardly conceivable that King George, as a constitutional monarch, could have given a categorical promise that, in all circumstances, England would remain neutral during a war in which France should be involved. Precisely what language was employed in answer to Prince Henry's inquiry neither the Prince nor the Kaiser informs us. How much of the Prince's report was mere inference we cannot, therefore, judge; but, whatever it was, Prince Henry in his telegram tells the King, "William was very thankful to receive your message."<sup>2</sup> He also assures King George that "William is inspired by the greatest sincerity in his efforts for the maintenance of peace." Why, then, was he seeking from King George neutrality,

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 40.

<sup>2</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix II, No. 1.



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and not aid in promoting peace? There is no evidence in these documents that such aid had been requested. It was neutrality, not aid toward peace, the Kaiser himself asserts, that he had sought and believed he had been promised. Was it for this that he was "very thankful?" Prince Henry, it is true, proposes in his telegram to King George that he should use his "influence on France and also on Russia that they should remain neutral," while Austria proceeds to crush Serbia. This, he adds, "I consider a certain and, perhaps, the only possible way of maintaining the peace of Europe." Evidently Prince Henry knew William II's mind. Foreseeing a general war before a sufficient cause for its occurrence had been developed, the Kaiser, by his own statement of the case, was simply endeavoring to obtain, as the culmination of the understanding with Great Britain that had been brought about by Lichnowsky's negotiations, the neutrality for which Germany had so earnestly sought at the time of Lord Haldane's mission.

It was not, however, upon the assurance of Prince Henry alone that William II based the hope of securing this result.

"2. My ambassador in London," he continues, "transmitted a message from Sir E. Grey to Berlin saying that only in case France was likely to be crushed England would interfere."<sup>1</sup>

In making this statement Prince Lichnowsky was

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<sup>1</sup> Continuation of message to the President. See also Illustrative Document No. IX.

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amply justified; for, as we now know, on July 25th, the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, had said to the British ambassador at St. Petersburg: "I do not consider that public opinion here would or ought to sanction our going to war over a Serbian quarrel."<sup>1</sup>

With alacrity, on Sunday, July 26th, as soon as Prince Henry's hypothetical question suggested the possibility of a continental conflict, Sir Edward Grey, taking alarm at this foreboding, proposed to Berlin, Paris, and Rome a conference, "to meet immediately for the purpose of discovering an issue which would prevent complications."<sup>2</sup> The Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sazonof, welcomed the suggestion and thought it "necessary that Great Britain should take instant mediatory action."<sup>3</sup>

What at this moment was the attitude of Berlin?

On July 27th, when the British ambassador, Sir Edward Goschen, presented Grey's proposal, the Imperial German Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Von Jagow, declared, "The conference you suggest would practically amount to a court of arbitration;" and he could not, therefore, "fall in with it." When the ambassador insisted that the proposal "had nothing to do with arbitration, but meant that representatives of the four nations not directly interested should discuss and suggest means for

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 24.

<sup>2</sup> The same, No. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 48.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

avoiding a dangerous situation," without denying this, Von Jagow remained hostile to the plan and declared that such a conference was "not practicable."<sup>1</sup> The Secretary did not need to consult the Emperor upon this point; he already understood his views and his purpose. Lichnowsky, however, did not have this understanding. He, on the contrary, informed Sir Edward Grey that the German Government accepted "in principle" mediation between Austria and Russia;<sup>2</sup> whereupon Sir Edward, on July 28th, assuming the acceptance of the idea of a conference, informed Goschen: "I am ready to propose that the German Secretary of State should suggest the lines on which this principle should be applied."<sup>3</sup> But matters had by this time gone too far. Austria had already declared war on Serbia, and the Imperial German Government announced its position that there must be no interference from outside.

On July 27th the Russian chargé d'affaires at Berlin had written to the Minister for Foreign Affairs at St. Petersburg:

"Before my visit to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day his Excellency had received the French ambassador, who endeavored to induce him to accept the British proposal for action in favor of peace, such action to be taken simultaneously at St. Petersburg and at Vienna by Great Britain,

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 43.

<sup>2</sup> The same, No. 46.

<sup>3</sup> The same, No. 68.

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Germany, Italy, and France. Cambon suggested that these powers should give their advice to Vienna in the following terms: 'To abstain from all action which might aggravate the situation. . . .' Jagow refused point blank to accept this suggestion in spite of the entreaties of the ambassador."<sup>1</sup>

On July 29th the British ambassador at Berlin telegraphed to Sir Edward Grey:

"I was sent for again to-day by the Imperial Chancellor, who told me that he regretted to state that the Austro-Hungarian government, to whom he had at once communicated your opinion, had answered that events had marched too rapidly and that it was therefore too late to act upon your suggestion that the Serbian reply might form a basis of discussion."<sup>2</sup>

Neither the Austrian Red Book nor the German White Book contains any word from Vienna to this effect. It was quite unnecessary. The attitude of Vienna had been already decreed at Berlin. There is no concealment of this.

"We declared," says the German White Book, "in regard to this proposal, that we could not, however much we approved the idea, participate in such a conference, as we could not call Austria in her dispute before a European tribunal. Faithful to our principle that mediation should not extend to the Austro-Serbian conflict, which is to be considered as a purely Austro-Hungarian affair, but

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 39.

<sup>2</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 75.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

merely to the relations of Austria-Hungary and Russia, we continued our endeavors to bring about an understanding between these two powers,"<sup>1</sup> endeavors which consisted in assuring Austria of German support, and threatening Russia with German hostility unless her efforts to obtain justice for Serbia were abandoned.

Kaiser William II was, in the mean time, ceasing to be "thankful" for the neutrality he had believed might be expected from Great Britain. The interest of the British Government in maintaining peace was annoying to him. Why, if England really meant to be neutral, was Sir Edward Grey so solicitous to avoid a general war? William II, as his message to the President implies, was growing indignant about it.

Something, therefore, must be attempted to restrain Great Britain's activities for peace. How could that be better accomplished than by Germany herself taking the field as a peacemaker? The effect of this move in Great Britain is thus described by Sir Edward Grey under date of July 29th, in a telegram to the British ambassador at Berlin:

"The German ambassador has been instructed by the German Chancellor to inform me that he is endeavoring to mediate between Vienna and St. Petersburg, and he hopes with good success. Austria and Russia seem to be in constant touch, and he is endeavoring to make Vienna explain in a satis-

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<sup>1</sup> German White Book, preliminary statement.

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factory form at St. Petersburg the scope and extension of Austrian proceedings in Serbia. . . . I urged that the German Government should suggest any method by which the influence of the four powers could be used together to prevent war between Austria and Russia. France agreed. Italy agreed. The whole idea of mediation or mediating influence was ready to be put into operation by any method that Germany could suggest, if mine was not acceptable. In fact, mediation was ready to come into operation by any method that Germany thought possible, if only Germany would 'press the button' in the interests of peace."<sup>1</sup>

We shall see presently how Germany pressed the button!

The subject of mediation having been thus passed over to Germany, the Imperial German Foreign Office at once proceeded to take soundings on the question of British neutrality. Would Great Britain stand aside and permit Germany and Austria to fight Russia and France without interference?

This effort to obtain reassurance for the Kaiser is best narrated in the following telegram of July 29th, from Sir Edward Goschen:

"I was asked to call upon the Chancellor to-night. His Excellency had just returned from Potsdam.

"He said that, should Austria be attacked by Russia, a European conflagration might, he feared, become inevitable, owing to Germany's obligations as Austria's ally, in spite of his continued efforts to

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 84.



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maintain peace. He then proceeded to make the following strong bid for British neutrality. He said that it was clear, so far as he was able to judge the main principle which governed British policy, that Great Britain would never stand by and allow France to be crushed in any conflict there might be. That, however, was not the object at which Germany aimed. Provided that the neutrality of Great Britain were certain, every assurance would be given to the British Government that the Imperial Government aimed at no territorial acquisitions at the expense of France, should they prove victorious in any war that might ensue.

“I questioned his Excellency about the French colonies, and he said that he was unable to give a similar undertaking in that respect. As regards Holland, however, his Excellency said that, so long as Germany’s adversaries respected the integrity and neutrality of the Netherlands, Germany was ready to give his Majesty’s government an assurance that she would do likewise. It depended upon the action of France what operations Germany might be forced to enter upon in Belgium, but when the war was over, Belgian integrity would be respected if she had not sided against Germany.

“His Excellency ended by saying that ever since he had been Chancellor the object of his policy had been, as you were aware, to bring about an understanding with England; he trusted that these assurances might form the basis of that understanding which he so much desired. He had in mind a gen-

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

eral neutrality agreement between England and Germany, though it was of course at the present moment too early to discuss details, and an assurance of British neutrality in the conflict which the present crisis might possibly produce, would enable him to look forward to realization of his desire.”<sup>1</sup>

To this Sir Edward Grey promptly answered:

“His Majesty’s Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor’s proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms. What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken and France is beaten, so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies. . . . It would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover.”

On July 29th, William II had received the following telegram from Czar Nicholas:

“I am glad you are back in Germany. In this serious moment I ask you earnestly to help me. An ignominious war has been declared against a weak country, and in Russia the indignation, which I fully share, is tremendous. I fear that very soon I shall be unable to resist the pressure exercised upon me and that I shall be forced to take measures which will lead to war. To prevent a calamity, as a European war would be, I urge you in the name of

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 85. See Illustrative Document No. VIII for Sir Edward Grey’s reply.

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our old friendship to do all in your power to restrain your ally from going too far.”<sup>1</sup>

Then followed the exchange of telegrams between the Kaiser and the Czar, in which Nicholas II pleaded for the Kaiser’s mediation with Austria, and William II, assuring him of his good offices, menaced him with war if he resorted to military preparations against Austria. This correspondence was published in full in the German White Book, but not one word of the alleged mediation which the Kaiser professed to be conducting with Austria was made public! The part Austria was to play had been already arranged, and Germany’s support had been already pledged. There is no documentary evidence that any mediation, in the proper sense of the word, was undertaken by the Kaiser.

The subject of British neutrality on July 30th suddenly assumed a definite form. The Kaiser himself, in his communication to the President above referred to, states how he understood it.

“On the 30th,” he says, “my ambassador in London reported that Sir Edward Grey, in course of a ‘private’ conversation, told him that if the conflict remained localized between Russia—not Serbia—and Austria, England would not move, but if we ‘mixed’ in the fray she would take quick decisions and grave measures, i.e., if I left my ally, Austria, in the lurch, to fight alone, England would not touch me.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> German White Book, No. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Continuation of message to the President. See Illustrative Document No. IX for Grey’s interview with Lichnowsky.

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Unwittingly, the Chancellor, in his request for neutrality, had lifted the veil and disclosed to Great Britain the predatory designs of Germany. The nature of the war William II had anticipated in his hypothetical question to King George was now better understood at London. Bethmann-Hollweg had been unable to give any assurance regarding the French colonies when France had been weakened by a war in which Germany was to be the victor! Belgium and Holland, too, were subject to contingencies. It was for such exploits that British neutrality was sought!

Continuing to unfold his mind to the President, the Kaiser says:

“This communication [the German ambassador’s telegram of July 30th, above referred to] being directly counter to the King’s message to me, I telegraphed to H. M. on the 29th and 30th, thanking him for his kind messages through my brother, and begging him to use all his power to keep France and Russia, his allies, from making any warlike preparations calculated to disturb my work of mediation, stating that I was in constant communication with H. M. the Czar. In the evening the King kindly answered that he had ordered his government to use every possible influence with his allies to refrain from taking any provocative military measures. At the same time H. M. asked me if I would transmit to Vienna the British proposal that Austria was to take Belgrade and a few other Serbian towns, and a strip of country, as a ‘main

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mise' to make sure that the other Serbian promises on paper should be fulfilled in reality. This proposal was in the same moment telegraphed to me from Vienna for London, quite in conjunction with the British proposal. Besides, I had telegraphed to H. M. the Czar, the same as an idea of mine, before I received the two communications from Vienna and London. As both were of the same opinion, I immediately transmitted the telegrams vice versa, Vienna and London. I felt that I was able to tide the question over and was happy at the peaceful outlook."<sup>1</sup>

Here is the first definite statement of the character of the advice given to Austria. Unfortunately, there is no document, although the exchanges between the Kaiser and the Czar are printed in the German White Book, to show that William II ever telegraphed to Nicholas II as an idea of his own the substance of Sir Edward Grey's proposal. Grey's message was never publicly referred to until November 9, 1916, when the Chancellor, Bethmann-Hollweg, replying to a charge made by Sir Edward Grey, informed the Reichstag that on July 30, 1914, he had sent the following instructions to the German ambassador at Vienna:

"Should the Austro-Hungarian Government refuse all mediation, we are confronted with a conflagration in which England would go against us, and Italy and Rumania, according to all indications, would not be with us; so that with Austria-Hungary

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<sup>1</sup> The message to the President.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

we should confront three great powers. Germany, as the result of England's hostility, would have to bear the chief brunt of the fight. The political prestige of Austria-Hungary, the honor of her arms, and her justified claims against Serbia can be sufficiently safeguarded by the occupation of Belgrade or other places. We therefore urgently and emphatically ask the Vienna Cabinet to consider the acceptance of mediation on the proposed conditions. Responsibility for the consequences which may otherwise arise must be extraordinarily severe for Austria-Hungary and ourselves."<sup>1</sup>

Is it possible that William II ever sent this message to the Czar as his own idea? The Chancellor's statement leaves no such impression. The reason for sending this message was a wholly new one. It was that, if Austria-Hungary made no concession beyond what they had previously been advised to make, the Central Powers would be "confronted with a conflagration" in which England would go against them!

"The Austro-Hungarian Government," the Chancellor continues, "acceded to our urgent representations by giving its ambassador in Berlin the following instruction:

" 'I ask your Excellency most sincerely to thank Herr von Jagow, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, for the information given through Herr von Tschirschky, and to declare to him that, despite the change in the situation which has since arisen

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<sup>1</sup> Not referred to in the German White Book.



## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

through the Russian mobilization, we are quite ready to consider the proposals of Sir Edward Grey for a settlement between us and Serbia. A condition of our acceptance is, of course, that our military action against Serbia should meanwhile proceed, and that the English Cabinet should induce the Russian Government to bring to a standstill the Russian mobilization directed against us, in which case also we, as a matter of course, will at once cancel our defensive countermeasures forced upon us in Galicia.' ”<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, this reply is not an unconditional acceptance of Sir Edward Grey's proposal, which was that Austrian military action in Serbia should not “proceed,” but be “suspended”; for, as he states, “otherwise a mediation would only drag on matters, and give Austria time to crush Serbia.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, this message was not sent from Vienna until July 31st.<sup>3</sup> If, therefore, the Kaiser is correct in his statement, “I immediately transmitted the telegrams vice versa, Vienna and London,” and these telegrams were, as he says, “quite in conjunction,” the transmission could not have occurred until late in the day on the 31st of July. The really important point, however, is that this alleged agreement for a conference, which Germany had constantly opposed, but which is here represented as so acceptable that the Kaiser could say,

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<sup>1</sup> Printed in substantially the same terms in the Austro-Hungarian Red Book, I, No. 51. See Illustrative Document No. X.

<sup>2</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 88.

<sup>3</sup> Austro-Hungarian Red Book, as above.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

"I felt that I was able to tide the question over and was happy at the peaceful outlook," was never communicated by William II to the Czar! If, as the Kaiser thought, there was an open door of peace, the fact was not communicated to Russia.

"While I was preparing a note to H. M. the Czar the next morning," the Kaiser continues in his message to the President, "to inform him that Vienna, London, and Berlin were agreed about the treatment of affairs, I received the telephones from H. E. the Chancellor that on the night before the Czar had given the order to mobilize the whole of the Russian army, which was, of course, also meant against Germany, whereas up till then the southern armies had been mobilized against Austria."

The Kaiser here represents that *in the morning of July 31st*, while preparing a note to the Czar to inform him that "Vienna, London, and Berlin were agreed about the treatment of affairs," he was interrupted by telephone messages from the Chancellor that "on the night before" the Czar had given the order to mobilize the whole Russian Army. In his telegram of July 31st to King George, however, he says: "Your proposals coincide with my ideas and with the communication which I have *this evening* received from Vienna, and which I have passed on to London. I have *just heard* from the Chancellor that intelligence has *just reached him* that Nicholas *this evening* has ordered the mobilization of his entire army and fleet."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 3.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

The contemporary statement undoubtedly is to be preferred to that made from memory. It was, therefore, in the evening of July 31st that William II received the reply from Vienna, and at the same time learned that the Czar had ordered general mobilization. The German White Book plainly states that the general Russian mobilization was ordered "during the afternoon of the 31st of July." It could not, therefore, have been known by William II in the morning of the 31st.

On that same date he received from Nicholas II the following telegram:

"I thank you cordially for your mediation, which permits the hope that everything may yet end peaceably. It is technically impossible to discontinue our military preparations, which have been made necessary by the Austrian mobilization. It is far from us to want war. As long as the negotiations between Austria and Serbia continue my troops will undertake no provocative action. I give you my solemn word thereon. I confide with all my faith in the grace of God, and I hope for success of your mediation in Vienna, for the welfare of our countries, and the peace of Europe."<sup>1</sup>

To this the Kaiser replied at 2 P.M., without referring to any general mobilization—of which he was not yet informed—saying: "I now receive authentic news of serious preparations for war on my eastern frontier;" and adding, "The responsibility for the disaster which is now threatening the whole

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<sup>1</sup> German White Book, no number.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

civilized world will not be laid at my door. In this moment it still lies in your power to avert it.”<sup>1</sup>

On the evening of July 31st William II not only held in his possession the answer of the Austro-Hungarian Government alleging its modified consent to follow the suggestions of Sir Edward Grey, but a telegram sent by the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office to all its embassies and legations, saying: “Negotiations dealing with the situation are proceeding between the Cabinets at Vienna and St. Petersburg, and we hope that they may lead to a general understanding.”<sup>2</sup>

At the same time he had in hand a telegram from Nicholas II, reading: “It would be right to give over the Austro-Serbian problem to The Hague Tribunal. I trust in your wisdom and friendship.”<sup>3</sup> Not only this, the Kaiser knew that, on July 31st, Sazonof, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, had handed to the German ambassador at St. Petersburg the following statement, accepting in principle the proposal of Sir Edward Grey:

“If Austria consents to stay the march of her troops on Serbian territory, and if, recognizing that the Austro-Serbian conflict has assumed the character of a question of European interest, she admits that the great powers may examine the satisfaction which Serbia can accord to the Austro-

<sup>1</sup> German White Book, no number.

<sup>2</sup> Austro-Hungarian Red Book, I, No. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Published in the Russian press on January 31, 1915. See Scott, *Documents*, Part II, p. 1029. Not printed in German White Book, and afterward explained as “unimportant.”

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Hungarian Government without injury to her rights as a sovereign state or her independence, Russia undertakes to maintain her waiting attitude.”<sup>1</sup>

Only the knowledge by Nicholas II of the fact of Austria's acceptance and Germany's approval were necessary to the meeting of a conference for a pacific settlement of the Austro-Serbian controversy, yet the Kaiser did not send to the Czar the note he says he was preparing.

In these circumstances, on the evening of July 31st, upon the announcement in Berlin of a Russian order for general mobilization, an ultimatum was telegraphed to St. Petersburg directing the Imperial German Ambassador to inform the Russian Government that, if Russia did not stop every measure of war against Germany and Austria-Hungary within twelve hours and notify Germany definitely to that effect, German mobilization would follow.<sup>2</sup> At midnight of the 31st this ultimatum was delivered.

It was “mobilization,” not a declaration of war that was to follow if Russia did not comply with Germany's demands. Yet at 12.52 P.M. of August 1, the German ambassador at St. Petersburg was instructed, “In case the Russian Government make no satisfactory reply to our demand, your Excellency will please transmit this afternoon, five o'clock (mid-European time), the following statement:

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 67.

<sup>2</sup> German White Book, No. 23.

## RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE WAR

“His Majesty the Emperor, my august Sovereign, in the name of the Empire, accepts the challenge and considers Himself in a state of war with Russia. Please wire, urgent, receipt and time of carrying out this instruction by Russian time.”<sup>1</sup>

Kaiser William II had at last staged the tragedy for which his whole reign had been a preparation.

Three matters of importance deserve consideration in this connection.

The first is the attitude of Great Britain, accused by Germany of having brought on the war by a process of “encirclement.” On July 30th King George V telegraphed to Prince Henry:

“I earnestly desire that such misfortune as a European war—the evil of which could not be remedied—may be prevented. My government is doing the utmost possible in order to induce Russia and France to postpone further military operations, provided that Austria declares herself satisfied with the occupation of Belgrade and the neighboring Serbian territory as a pledge of a satisfactory settlement of her demands, while at the same time the other countries suspend their preparations for war. I rely on William applying his great influence in order to induce Austria to accept this proposal. In this way he will prove that Germany and England are working together to prevent what would be an international catastrophe. Please assure William that I am doing all I can, and will continue

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<sup>1</sup> German White Book, No. 23.



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to do all in my power to maintain the peace of Europe.”<sup>1</sup>

On July 31st, Sir Edward Grey declared to the German ambassador:

“If Germany could get any reasonable proposal put forward which made it clear that Germany and Austria were striving to preserve European peace and that Russia and France would be unreasonable if they rejected it, I would support it at St. Petersburg and Paris, and go to the length of saying that if Russia and France would not accept it his Majesty’s Government would have nothing more to do with the consequences; but, otherwise, I told the German ambassador that if France became involved we should be drawn in.”<sup>2</sup>

If William II was sincere in his mediation for peace between Russia and Austria-Hungary, why did he not at least test the purpose of Russia by presenting to the Czar the note he says he was preparing on the 31st? He had the assurance that if Russia rejected a reasonable proposal the British

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> The same, No. III.

Every utterance of Sir Edward Grey tended to confirm the conviction at Berlin that Great Britain was strongly averse to war. “Over and over again,” writes Dr. E. J. Dillon, “I heard the chances of British neutrality discussed by statesmen of the two military empires, and the odds in favor of our holding strictly aloof from hostilities were set down as equivalent to certainty. The grounds for this conviction were numerous, and, to them, convincing. . . . British neutrality was an unquestioned postulate which lay at the very root of the scheme engineered by the empire-builders of Berlin. And they clung to it throughout with the tenacity of drowning men holding on to a frozen plank in Polar seas.”—*A Scrap of Paper*, London and New York, 1914, pp. 149, 141.

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Government would have nothing more to do with the consequences. Considering the Austrian concession reasonable, as he claims to have done, he had the opportunity to throw the responsibility for war upon Russia in a sense which even Great Britain would be bound to accept.

But what if Russia should conform to this reasonable proposal? Then, of course, there would be no war!

Did the Kaiser believe, from the tone of Great Britain's communication, that in the event of war her neutrality was still possible? Nothing seemed to prevent it but the safety of France. As late as August 1st, the date on which Germany declared war on Russia, Prince Lichnowsky reopened this subject at London.

"He asked me," wrote Sir Edward Grey on that day to Goschen, "if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality, we would engage to remain neutral. He even suggested that the integrity of France and her colonies might be guaranteed."<sup>1</sup>

At the moment of the German resolve to declare immediate war on Russia there was evidently a belief in Berlin that Great Britain was not only strongly indisposed to engage in war, but wholly unprepared to offer effective aid to France. Swift action, it was believed in Berlin, would end the contest before Great Britain could interpose.

But there were additional reasons on August 1st

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 123. See Illustrative Document No. XI.

## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

for concluding at Berlin that Great Britain was not to prove an obstruction to German plans, so urgent, so unexpected, were the British efforts for peace, as reported from London by Lichnowsky. Two telegrams were received from him on that day, both of which seemed to imply an extraordinary effort on the part of Great Britain to keep out of war. The first one read:

“Sir Edward Grey has just called me to the telephone and has asked me whether I thought I could declare that in the event of France remaining neutral in a German-Russian war we would not attack the French. I told him that I believed that I could assume responsibility for this.”<sup>1</sup>

The second, dated August 1, 1.15 P.M.:

“... Sir Edward Grey's Private Secretary has just been to see me in order to say that the Minister wishes to make proposals to me for the neutrality of England, even in the case that we had war with Russia and France. I see Sir Edward Grey this afternoon and will communicate at once.”<sup>2</sup>

The first of these telegrams does not indicate the hour when it was sent, but its substance shows that it was the earlier of the two, and in his memorandum Prince Lichnowsky definitely says the conversation referred to occurred in the morning.

Disappointing for the Kaiser as this alleged prospect of British neutrality eventually proved, it would appear that, on August 1st, there seemed to

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Published in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* of September 6, 1914.

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him good reason for the belief that Great Britain might persuade France not to take part in a continental war, and that in any case Great Britain was ready to negotiate regarding terms of neutrality.

This inference was, of course, an error, as Lichnowsky explains in the following comment:

“On the morning of August 1st, Sir William Tyrrell called on me, to tell me that his chief still hoped to find a way out. Would we remain neutral in case France did the same? I understood that we were to declare ourselves ready, in such case, to spare France; but his meaning was that we should remain altogether neutral, that is, toward Russia also. That was the well-known misunderstanding. Sir Edward had an appointment with me for that afternoon. At the moment he was at a meeting of the Cabinet, and, Sir William Tyrrell having hurried to him at once, he called me up on the telephone. In the afternoon, he talked only about Belgian neutrality and the possibility that we and France might face one another in arms without attacking.”<sup>1</sup>

The important point is that, on August 1st, William II understood that British and possibly French neutrality might be hoped for; while he, in company with Austria-Hungary, carried on a war with Russia and Serbia. His state of mind while laboring under this misapprehension is of special interest.

Fortunately, the Kaiser has expressed himself

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, p. 111.

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somewhat explicitly on this point in his message to the President:

“In a telegram from London my ambassador informed me he understood the British Government would guarantee the neutrality of France and wished to know whether Germany would refrain from attack. I telegraphed to his Majesty the King personally that mobilization, being already carried out, could not be stopped, but if H. M. could guarantee with his armed forces the neutrality of France I would refrain from attacking her, leave her alone, and employ my troops elsewhere. H. M. answered that he thought my offer was based on a misunderstanding, and as far as I can make out Sir E. Grey never took my offer into serious consideration. He never answered it. Instead, he declared that England had to defend Belgian neutrality, which had to be violated by Germany on strategical grounds, news having been received that France was already preparing to enter Belgium and the King of the Belgians having refused my petition for a passage under guarantee of his country’s freedom. I am most grateful for the President’s message.”

What becomes of the charge of “encirclement” when the inventor of this catchword could seriously believe, even for a moment, in the British guarantee of French neutrality while Germany subdued Russia? Yet, in his telegram of August 1st to King George V, William II is more explicit even than he is in his message to the President. He says:

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“I have just received the communication of your government offering French neutrality under the guarantee of Great Britain. To this offer there was added the question whether, under these conditions, Germany would refrain from attacking France. For technical reasons the mobilization which I have already ordered this afternoon on two fronts—east and west—must proceed according to the arrangements made. A counter order cannot now be given, as your telegram unfortunately came too late, but if France offers us her neutrality, which must be guaranteed by the English army and navy, I will naturally give up the idea of an attack on France and employ my troops elsewhere. I hope that France will not be nervous. The troops on my frontier are at this moment being kept back by telegraph and by telephone from crossing the French frontier.”<sup>1</sup>

How seriously the possibility of British and even French neutrality was taken at Berlin is evident from the Imperial German Chancellor's telegram of August 1st to Prince Lichnowsky, stating that, “in the event of England guaranteeing with all her forces the unconditional neutrality of France in the conflict between Germany and Russia,” the Germans would not cross the French frontier before 7 P.M. of August 3d.

At this moment the Kaiser was proclaiming in Berlin that the sword had been forced into his hand

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 6. See Illustrative Document No. XII.



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by a coalition of hostile powers, and that he was fighting a war of defense to preserve Germany's existence; while, in secret, he was demanding of France an "unconditional" neutrality and of Great Britain that all her armed forces should be employed to restrain France from defending herself, thus actually in effect proposing the violation of the very principle of neutrality by utilizing the whole of Great Britain's forces in Germany's interest! And if, in forty-eight hours, all this were not pledged, William II would not give up the idea of an attack on France—although, to avoid collision, her outposts were withdrawn ten kilometers from her frontier—and would *not* leave her alone. During this interval his troops, although mobilization, it was represented, had been only just ordered, were being kept back by telegraph and by telephone from crossing the French frontier. What if a message should fail to reach them? He hoped that France would not be nervous!

All this, it is true, was dispelled by Lichnowsky's telegram of August 2d, stating that "the suggestions of Sir Edward Grey, based on the desire of creating the possibility of lasting neutrality on the part of England, were made without any previous inquiry of France and without knowledge of the mobilization, and have been given up as quite impracticable."<sup>1</sup> In his memorandum he adds: "There was no proposal at all, but a question that carried with it no binding engagement, since our

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 9.

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interview was to take place soon afterward. Berlin, however, without waiting for an interview, made the news the basis of far-reaching activity.”<sup>1</sup>

In the mean time France and Germany had been asked if they would respect the neutrality of Belgium. The reply of France was prompt and unequivocal, that of Germany was withheld; but, notwithstanding that, on May 2, 1913, it had been stated in the Reichstag that “the neutrality of Belgium is guaranteed by international treaty,” the evasion of the Foreign Office rendered it evident that Germany did not intend to respect it. In his message to the President, quite as frankly as the Imperial Chancellor in his announcement to the Reichstag on August 4th that “necessity knows no law,” the Kaiser places this violation of a treaty obligation on the ground of military strategy; but his conscience rebukes him in the midst of his attempt at self-justification. In his autograph message, as the facsimile reveals, he had written, “Knowledge having been received that France was already preparing to enter Belgium”; but the falsehood of this statement was too glaring and too easily refuted. He, therefore, crossed out “knowledge” and wrote in “news.”

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<sup>1</sup> Monroe Smith's translation, p. 111. It is deserving of note that, on July 30th, Sir Edward Grey had said to Prince Lichnowsky:

“And I will say this: If the peace of Europe can be preserved, and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavor will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately.”—British Blue Book, I, No. 101.

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“Mobilization, having been already ordered,” William II wrote, “could not be stopped”—not even against a neutral France without the British guarantee. And yet it was the simple fact of Russia’s mobilization that, in the Kaiser’s mind, constituted a sufficient reason for a declaration of war. That is the plea put forth by William II himself and emphasized by his Chancellor, who has declared the Russian mobilization to be the cause of the war.

By all the rules and precedents of modern warfare, the proper answer to mobilization is mobilization. It increases the gravity of negotiation, but it does not necessarily terminate it; it only renders it the more urgent. Mobilization does not necessarily mean war; and even on August 1, 1914, the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs was assured by the German ambassador at St. Petersburg that it did not.<sup>1</sup> Before war was actually declared by William II on Russia, in a telegram dated 2 P.M. of August 1st, Nicholas II said to the Kaiser:

“I comprehend that you are forced to mobilize, but I should like to have from you, viz., that these measures do not mean war, and that we shall continue to negotiate for the welfare of our two countries and the universal peace which is so dear to our hearts. With the aid of God it must be possible to our long-tried friendship to prevent the shedding of blood. I expect with full confidence your urgent reply.”<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 70.

<sup>2</sup> German White Book—no number. See Illustrative Document No. XIII.

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At that moment, in addition to the assurances from the other powers, William II had in his possession the key, as he believed, to the door of peace in Austria-Hungary's acceptance of the British proposal. He knew also that Russia and Austria-Hungary were at that time engaged in further negotiations. Yet at 7.10 P.M. that evening the declaration of war was presented at St. Petersburg, on the ground that the Russian Government had not answered Germany's demand to cease mobilization within twelve hours.

How readily the Austro-Serbian War could have been terminated, and a general European war averted if William II had merely withheld his declaration of war and allowed negotiations to proceed, is evident from the telegram sent by Nicholas II to George V on August 1st, immediately after the Kaiser's sudden and unjustified action in considering mobilization as identical with war. He says:

"I would gladly have accepted your proposals had not the German ambassador this afternoon presented a note to my government declaring war. Ever since presentation of the ultimatum at Belgrade, Russia has devoted all her efforts to finding some pacific solution of the question raised by Austria's action. Object of that action was to crush Serbia and make her a vassal of Austria. Effect of this would have been to upset balance of power in Balkans, which is of such vital interest to my Empire. Every proposal, including that of your

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government, was rejected by Germany and Austria, and it was only when favorable moment for bringing pressure to bear on Austria had passed that Germany showed any disposition to mediate. Even then she did not put forward any precise proposal. Austria's declaration of war on Serbia forced me to order a partial mobilization, though, in view of threatening situation, my military advisers strongly advised a general mobilization, owing to quickness with which Germany can mobilize in comparison with Russia.<sup>1</sup> I was eventually compelled to take this course in consequence of complete Austrian mobilization, of the bombardment of Belgrade, of concentration of Austrian troops in Galicia, and of secret military preparations being made in Germany. That I was justified in doing so is proved by Germany's sudden declaration of war, which was quite unexpected by me, as I have given most categorical assurances to the Emperor William that my troops would not move so long as mediation negotiations continued.

"In this solemn hour I wish to assure you once more that I have done all in my power to avert war. Now that it has been forced on me, I trust your

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<sup>1</sup> "To realize why Russian mobilization must be slow, one has only to glance at the Russian railway rolling stock. The whole empire, in Europe as well as Asia, owns less than 20,000 passenger coaches, 1,000 of which are parlor cars: The total seating capacity of these coaches is less than 700,000, while the German seating capacity is four times as great, and if one compares the distances in Germany with those in Russia, not four times, but more nearly forty times as great. Russia has less than 400,000 freight cars, while Germany has almost 600,000 freight cars."—Von Mach, *What Germany Wants*, Boston, 1914, following statistics published in the *North German Gazette* of August 23, 1914.

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country will not fail to support France and Russia. God bless and protect you.”<sup>1</sup>

In view of the convincing character of the cumulative evidence that the crime of causing the war rested upon the military designs of Germany, it is not surprising that in defending itself against the accusation, the Imperial German Government laid the blame alternately upon Russia, England, and France, according as some incident seemed for the moment to serve its purpose.

When, in September, 1917, the former Russian Chief of Staff, Soukhomlinof, was tried for treason, the Imperial German Chancellor, abandoning the indictment against Great Britain, which had furnished the chief thesis since England's entrance into the war, after the invasion of Belgium, claimed that the disclosures made in the trial “would force public opinion in Europe and outside of Europe to modify its judgment concerning Germany.”<sup>2</sup>

General Janouchkevitch had testified that when, on July 29, 1914, Soukhomlinof assured the German military attaché at St. Petersburg that no order of mobilization had been issued, he had at that time a signed order in his pocket. This fact, argued the Chancellor, furnished a positive proof that Russia intended war, and that Germany was, therefore, justified in declaring war before Russia was ready.

He took occasion to go further, and to say that

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, II, No. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Interview of Doctor Mantler with Chancellor Michaelis, published by the Wolf Agency at Berlin.



## IMPRESSIONS OF THE KAISER

Soukhomlinof was in collusion with the Chauvinist group in France, and even to utter the absurd insinuation that this Russian officer "was sent to France for the purpose of placing M. Poincaré at the head of the French Republic."<sup>1</sup>

Admitting that the testimony of General Janouchkevitch is truthful, it is not surprising that General Soukhomlinof carried in his pocket, on July 29th, an order of mobilization which was not issued until July 31st. The surprise is that it was not issued earlier, for on July 29th Sazonof telegraphed to the Russian ambassador at Paris:

"The German ambassador to-day informed me of the decision of his government to mobilize, if Russia did not stop her military preparations. Now, in point of fact, we only began these preparations in consequence of the mobilization already undertaken by Austria, and owing to her evident unwillingness to accept any means of arriving at a peaceful settlement of her dispute with Serbia."<sup>2</sup>

But Russia's right to contemplate a general order of mobilization, and to have it ready to be issued when needed, hardly required this new menace from Germany. Already, on July 5th, the Crown Council at Potsdam had decided to sustain Austria-Hungary in the subjugation of Serbia. In fact, even overlooking that decision, German mobilization was decided upon on that very day—July 29th—by a Crown Council held in the Neues Palais.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview of Doctor Mantler with Chancellor Michaelis.

<sup>2</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 58.

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On July 30th, the Russian ambassador at Berlin telegraphed his Minister:

"I learn that the order for mobilization of the German Army and Navy has just been issued."<sup>1</sup>

A newspaper extra containing this order had been published in Berlin, but was at once suppressed as premature. Mobilization, however, had, in fact, been decided upon, and the public announcement of it had been printed, but publication was withheld, as explained by the French ambassador in the following despatch of July 30th:

"Herr von Jagow telephoned to me at two o'clock that the news of the German mobilization which had spread an hour before was false, and asked me to inform you of this urgently; the Imperial Government is confiscating the extra editions of the papers which announced it. But neither this communication nor these steps diminish my apprehension with regard to the plans of Germany.

"It seems certain that the Extraordinary Council held yesterday evening at Potsdam with the military authorities, under the presidency of the Emperor, decided on mobilization, and this explains the preparation of the special editions of the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, but that from various causes (the declaration of Great Britain that she reserved her entire liberty of action, the exchange of telegrams between the Czar and William II) the serious measures which had been decided upon were suspended.

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<sup>2</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 60.

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“One of the ambassadors with whom I have very close relations saw Herr Zimmermann at two o’clock. According to the Under Secretary of State the military authorities are very anxious that mobilization should be ordered, because every delay makes Germany lose some of her advantages. Nevertheless, up to the present, the haste of the General Staff, which sees war in mobilization, had been successfully prevented. In any case, mobilization may be decided upon any moment. I do not know who had issued in the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, a paper which is usually semi-official, premature news calculated to cause excitement in France.

“Further, I have the strongest reasons to believe *that all the measures for mobilization which can be taken before the publication of the general order of mobilization have already been taken here, and that they are anxious here to make us publish our mobilization first*, in order to attribute the responsibility to us.”<sup>1</sup>

With the knowledge possessed at St. Petersburg, and especially in view of Germany’s greater rapidity of movement and readiness for war, the fact that the Russian order for mobilization was withheld until July 31st is clearly good evidence that Russia was still hoping for a peaceful solution of the Austro-Serbian problem, which was the only excuse for war. We must consider also that, even as late as August 1st, Russian mobilization was only “or-

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<sup>1</sup> French Yellow Book, No. 105. See Illustrative Document No. XIV.

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dered," while German mobilization was, according to the Kaiser's telegram to King George, already practically accomplished. Even on July 31st, President Poincaré had telegraphed to King George, whose government had not yet promised to come to the aid of France:

"The military preparations which are being undertaken by the Imperial Government, especially in the immediate neighborhood of the French frontier, are being pushed forward every day with fresh vigor and speed."<sup>1</sup>

That the Czar's order for general mobilization was promulgated on July 31st affords no evidence, therefore, in view of his solemn avowal to the contrary, that he desired war. Indeed, the testimony in the trial of General Soukhomlinof furnishes conclusive evidence that the Czar did not desire war. General Janouchkevitch testified that "on July 29th, the Czar consented to sign the Russian mobilization; but, in the night, having received a telegram from William II, he gave an order to sus-

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, V. No. 1.

Not only were conversations going on at St. Petersburg and Vienna between the representatives of Russia and Austria-Hungary, but, "On August 1," writes Sir Maurice de Bunsen, British Ambassador at Vienna, "I was informed by M. Schebeko [Russian Ambassador at Vienna] that Count Szapary [Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg] had at last conceded the main point at issue by announcing to M. Sazonof that Austria would consent to submit to mediation the points in the Note to Serbia which seemed incompatible with the maintenance of Serbian independence. . . . Austria, in fact, had finally yielded, and that she herself had at this point good hopes of a peaceful issue is shown by the communication made on August 1st by Count Mensdorff, to the effect that Austria had neither 'banged the door' on compromise nor cut off the conversations."—British Blue Book, I, No. 161.

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pend that ukase,"<sup>1</sup> and it was not published until the 31st.

What becomes, then, of the pretense that Russia plunged Europe into war? Within forty-eight hours of the Czar's decision to arrest military preparations, if this testimony be accepted, instead of giving time for diplomacy to do its work, William II, in the face of Nicholas II's plea for peace, declared war on Russia.

There is, therefore, no solid ground for the claim that Russian mobilization was the cause of the war. Russian mobilization was in response to Austro-Hungarian mobilization and a declaration of war on Serbia, which the Imperial German Government had abetted and approved, if it had not even suggested it.

It was, in fact, only as an ally of Austria-Hungary that Germany had any reason to arm against Russia. Although the *casus fœderis* did not come into existence unless Austria-Hungary was actually attacked by Russia, William II had, from the beginning, treated Russia as if the quarrel with Serbia were principally Germany's affair. As regarded from Berlin, the whole Balkan question was considered Germany's affair; for William II did not intend that there should be in the Balkans any barrier to the Hamburg-Bagdad extension of Germany's commercial enterprise and supremacy. Besides, the Pan-Germans who were influential in the military plans of Germany had, as we have seen,

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 159.

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definite designs on a disintegrated Russia. The attack on France, the Kaiser thought, might perhaps be delayed, under Great Britain's guarantee; but Russia must instantly disarm and either yield, without battle, to German predominance in the Balkans and to a German hegemony in Europe, or be subdued by the superiority of German force. Even in case of entire neutrality in the West, William II declared that, if he left France alone, he intended to use his troops against Russia.

Accordingly, although Austria-Hungary had announced on July 31st, "Despite the change in the situation which has resulted from Russia's mobilization, we are quite ready to consider the proposal of Sir Edward Grey to mediate between us and Serbia,"<sup>1</sup> William II did not permit this proposal to come into effect. The Austrians were hoping that further negotiations would "remove disquietude," while the Kaiser was representing that his Empire was in danger.

In truth, as has been pointed out, "the decision reached at Berlin . . . to treat Russian mobilization as an act of war, clearly took the Austrian Foreign Office by surprise."<sup>2</sup>

Until August 5th, the Foreign Secretary of Austria, Count Berchtold, remained silent. Germany alone, during that interval, was at war with Russia. And when, at last, Austria-Hungary also finally made her declaration, it was based mainly on the

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<sup>1</sup> Austro-Hungarian Red Book, I, No. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Monroe Smith's *Militarism and Statecraft*, New York, 1918, p. 94.



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action and representations of Germany. Its statement is:

“In view of the threatening attitude assumed by Russia in the conflict between the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and Serbia, and in view of the fact that, in consequence of this conflict, and according to a communication of the Berlin Cabinet, Russia has considered it necessary to open hostilities against Germany; furthermore, in view of the fact that the latter consequently has entered into a state of war with the former power, Austria-Hungary considers herself equally in a state of war with Russia.”<sup>1</sup>

No attack upon Austria-Hungary is here alleged, only a “threatening attitude,” on the part of Russia. That Russia had considered it necessary to open hostilities against Germany is not alleged as a known fact, but is taken on the authority of the Berlin Cabinet.

Finally, it is “in consequence” of Germany having entered into a state of war with Russia that Austria-Hungary considers herself “equally,” although thus tardily, also at war with Russia.

When William II finally interrupted what promised to be successful efforts for peace by a declaration of war, he did not even pretend that he did this in vindication of Austrian rights. The war, he declared to the German people, was a “war of defense” to preserve the existence of his Empire. He said this when, on August 1st, he believed that he had no opponent except Russia; for, as we have

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<sup>1</sup> Austro-Hungarian Red Book, I, No. 59.

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seen, he was counting at that time on British and possibly even French neutrality.

A telegram to Nicholas II accepting the Czar's entreaty that mobilization might not be considered as equivalent to war, and that negotiations might proceed, would have secured the peace of Europe.

At the celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of his accession to the throne, on June 8, 1918, William II, speaking to his officers of the General Staff, in a moment of frankness, has revealed to the world his true purpose in the war. Responding to the toast of Field-Marshal Hindenburg, after referring to the twenty-six years of "fruitful work" in which he had occupied himself with his army and its development, he said:

"At the outbreak of the war the German people were not clear as to what this war was to mean. I knew it very well. For that reason, even the first outburst of enthusiasm did not deceive me or cause any change in my aims and expectations, I knew very well what it was all about. For the entry of England signified the world struggle between two conceptions of the world. It was not a matter of a strategic campaign. It was a matter of the struggle between two conceptions of the world. Either the Prussian-German-Germanic world conception . . . or the Anglo-Saxon."

With characteristic sophistry, Kaiser William II identifies the former with "right, freedom, honor, and morals"; the latter with "the idolatry of money-getting."

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I pass over in silence this insinuation coming from one who can speak of "my army," "my navy," and "my Empire" as being his personal property, and who has failed to abolish the Prussian plutocratic three-class system of voting, which proportions political rights according to wealth and the ability to pay taxes; and I do not dwell upon the German looting of French châteaux, the extortions practised in Belgium, Ukrania, and Rumania, and the whole scheme of plunder advocated by the Pan-German party. But we cannot fail to see in this utterance the most important self-disclosure which the Kaiser has yet made. Here he frankly abandons the idea of a campaign provoked by French *revanche* or Russian mobilization.

The meaning of the war, which the Kaiser says he understood from the beginning, was a struggle between two world conceptions, the Prussian and the Anglo-Saxon. During all the time when he was seeking British neutrality he was aiming, it seems, only to divide his enemies, to allay suspicion of his real designs, and, by the immediate subjugation of France and Russia, to prepare the way for the real struggle, the conflict with the Anglo-Saxon conception, the fight for world domination, and the triumph of the Prussian idea. Does not this self-revelation by William II completely verify the exposition of his aims and policies presented in these chapters?

I am penning these concluding words on the fourth anniversary of England's entrance into the

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war. Why did England enter it? Not for world power, not for gain, not to prevent any legitimate aspirations of Germany, all of which had just been cheerfully conceded in treaties awaiting signature. On August 4, 1914, Sir Edward Grey telegraphed to the British ambassador at Berlin:

“We are informed that Belgian territory has been violated at Gemmenich. In these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Germany declined to give the same assurance respecting Belgium as France gave last week in reply to our request made simultaneously at Berlin and Paris, we must repeat that request and ask that a satisfactory reply to it and to my telegram of this morning be received here by twelve o’clock to-night. If not, you are instructed to ask for your passports and to say that his Majesty’s Government feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany is as much a party as ourselves.”<sup>1</sup>

But the die had been already cast. On that same day the Imperial Chancellor<sup>d</sup> said in the Reichstag:

“Gentlemen, we are now acting in self-defense. Necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and have possibly already entered on Belgian soil. Gentlemen, that is a breach of international law.

“The French Government has notified Brussels that it would respect Belgian neutrality as long as

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 159.

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the adversary respected it. But we know that France stood ready for an invasion. France could wait; we could not. A French invasion on our flank and the lower Rhine might have been disastrous. Thus we were forced to ignore the rightful protests of the governments of Luxemburg and Belgium. The injustice—I speak openly—the injustice we thereby commit we will try to make good as soon as our military aims have been attained. He who is menaced as we are and is fighting for his all can only consider the one and best way to strike.”<sup>1</sup>

In the interview between the Chancellor and the British ambassador which followed began what Kaiser William II professes to have understood from the beginning to be the real meaning of the war—the conflict between the Prussian and the Anglo-Saxon conceptions of the world. “Just for a word, ‘neutrality,’ a word which in war-time has so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper,” complained the Chancellor, “Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her!” “If it was for strategic reasons a matter of life and death to Germany,” as he had been told, replied the ambassador, “so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a ‘matter of life and death’ for the honor of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her ut-

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<sup>1</sup> *The London Times*, August 11, 1914. See Illustrative Document No. XV.

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most to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could any one have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future?" To which the Chancellor answered: "But at what price will that compact have been kept? Has the British Government thought of that?"<sup>1</sup>

"At what price!" And so, when it comes to action, "right, freedom, honor, and morals"—the boasted elements of the Prussian world conception—turn out to be mere idle words.

"At what price" has Germany paid, and at what price must she yet pay, for the folly and the madness of trying to impose upon mankind the Prussian world conception? No one, in 1914, was disposed to disturb the peace of Germany. Few understood her designs and ambitions. But the brutal assault upon an innocent and peaceful neighbor, trusting in the honor of the great and powerful nations to afford her protection, suddenly disclosed the lust for power, the predatory designs, the espionage, and the world-wide network of conspiracy with which the Imperial German Government has enveloped the earth. It was the morally inevitable culmination of the ambitions, the fantasies, and the impetuosity of Kaiser William II, unrestrained by a responsible government representing the permanent interests of the German people. He promised them gain and glory. He has covered them with sackcloth and ashes.

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 160. See Illustrative Document No. XVI.



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**I**N recording my impressions of the Kaiser I have tried to represent him as I believe he will pass into history up to the beginning of the Great War. Beyond this it is not my present purpose to follow him. Of the war itself and of his part in it there is no need that I should speak. The most recent words and deeds of William II indicate that there is no break in the continuity of his aims and purposes. His policies and his convictions thus far remain the same. Events have served only to render these more evident and more emphatic.

When the history of Europe during the last thirty years comes to be written, there will, perhaps, be a wide divergence among historians regarding the position and responsibility of the Kaiser. The German school of economic determinists, urging the irresistible tide of material growth in Germany, will endeavor to diminish the part actually played by the German Emperor and will tend to reduce him to virtual effacement. He may, perhaps, even be held up to the sympathy of mankind as in effect a martyr, the helpless victim of forces, economic and military, over which he had no control. Already, legends of this purport have made their appear-

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ance. According to one of these, at the moment of signing the declaration of war on Russia the Emperor is represented as saying to the military officers who are said to have forced his hand: "Gentlemen, you will live to regret this."<sup>1</sup> According to another tale, it was the Crown Prince who, pistol in hand, frightened the Emperor into a decision by the threat of a military revolution and William II's deposition.<sup>2</sup>

Such episodes as these do not harmonize with the recorded utterances of William II, repeated from the beginning of his reign and continued after the war began. While it is probably true that, for a time, he hoped to achieve his ends without actual bloodshed, it is undeniable that he had created a situation which rendered war inevitable, unless Russia, as well as Serbia, should prove content to undergo the deep humiliation which the Kaiser had deliberately and insistently endeavored to impose upon Nicholas II. Having prepared for war with

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. A. G. Gardiner, editor of the London *Daily News*, assured Mr. S. S. McClure that he had "sure sources of information" for this statement. See McClure, *Obstacles to Peace*, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> The influence of the Crown Prince upon William II has been greatly overestimated. His imprudence has often been reproved by the Kaiser, who has too high an opinion of himself to subordinate his own judgment to this young man or in any respect to fear him. His popularity with the army, which the Crown Prince has always cultivated, was before the war considerable; but the test of war has not developed any considerable military talent in this admirer of Napoleon I. According to Beyens, "At an official dinner, where he sat next to the wife of an ambassador from one of the Entente Powers, he could not think of anything more clever and gallant to say than that it was his cherished dream to make war and to lead a charge at the head of his regiment." There is no record that this last-named exploit has ever been performed by him.—*Germany Before the War*, p. 63.

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elaborate care, and resting the prestige of the German Empire on its military superiority, he needed only to be convinced that the moment was favorable to German success to launch the fatal thunderbolt. That conviction, at the moment of declaring war, as we have seen, was confidently entertained. It was not until Great Britain's entrance into the conflict that doubt arose. It was then too late to retreat without loss of prestige, as well as the renunciation of all plans of conquest. Emboldened by Great Britain's lack of preparation, in defiance of "French's contemptible little army," the conquest of Belgium and the assault on France were pushed with ferocious energy, until the tide was checked by the battle of the Marne.

Notwithstanding all this, and even dismissing the illusion that beneath his "shining armor" William II has always wished and labored for peace, there are those who will endeavor to maintain that neither he nor any other man who might happen to be the German Emperor could have prevented the European conflict which broke out in 1914. It was caused, it will be contended, by the inevitable development of forces wholly beyond the control of man. The growth of population, the need for new territories fit for German occupation and exploitation, the necessity of controlling tropical and semi-tropical lands as sources of raw materials, were irresistibly pushing the German nation toward expansion and colonization. Arrayed against both these tendencies were powerful neighbors,

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Russia and France on the Continent, Great Britain on the sea. Russia, it will be insisted, was pursuing a secular policy of driving the Turks out of Europe and taking possession of Constantinople as a gateway to the maritime world and as a barrier to German commerce in the Balkan Peninsula, Asia Minor, Syria, and Mesopotamia. France was resolved to avail herself of the first opportunity to recover her lost provinces, Alsace and Lorraine; and, therefore, impatient for Russia to engage in war with Germany, which would furnish an occasion for sustaining her ally in crushing Germany. Great Britain, jealous of the commercial development of Germany, and especially of her growing navy, had spread her Empire over the whole earth, had occupied the most vital points with her naval stations, and would block with her tremendous sea-power the plans of Germany for obtaining like advantages, thus retaining through her maritime strength a monopoly of the sea. To give all this array of obstacles to German expansion a dramatic effect, the legend of "encirclement" will perhaps be revived, by which the peaceful *entente* between Great Britain, France, and Russia has been magnified into an organized opposition to Germany and distorted into a malignant and aggressive form of hostility.

So long as this legend receives credence—as it has and still does in Germany—the determinists will seem to have good ground for their contention. Given all these factors of physical necessity and political conspiracy, it would seem true that neither

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William II nor any possible German Emperor could have avoided an ultimate collision.

Unfortunately for this theory, it cannot, in the light of demonstrable facts, be maintained that this alleged "encirclement" was real. Great Britain, long denounced in Germany as the "real enemy," has clearly manifested a disposition to promote satisfaction of the legitimate needs of the German people in the negotiation of the Grey-Lichnowsky treaties, and this fact is not disputed. Had Great Britain, with her extended commerce, closed her ports to Germany, or made them virtually inaccessible by a prohibitory tariff, there might have been ground for the accusation that England had established and was maintaining a monopoly of foreign trade; but, on the contrary, all England's ports were open to German exports, and all her colonies were for Germany unobstructed sources of raw materials. If, on the other hand, a dread of German procedure and its consequences has, at times, been expressed in England, and remedies have been discussed, it was the natural effect of what was known of Germany's confessed aims and purposes. The rapid development of the German navy might well excite apprehension in England when German ships were already enjoying not only the perfect "freedom of the seas," but were participating with British ships in the commerce of Great Britain itself in her home ports of Plymouth and Southampton. The military interest in the Zeppelin airships, which could hardly justify enthusiasm

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as auxiliaries of civil life, was, perhaps, an even more exciting cause of British apprehension. When to all this is added the influence of the voluminous and menacing Pan-German literature—unequaled in brutal projects by the Chauvinism of any other nation—circulating freely in a country where a rigid surveillance and control of the press are customary, there was ample room for public solicitude on the part of neighboring peoples regarding the intentions of a power that not only was possessed of the greatest military strength of any nation in the world, but whose Emperor on every critical occasion was openly proclaiming the doctrine that the only guarantee of peace is the sword.

Subsequent disclosures have demonstrated how great was the perversion of the truth in the German representation of the aggressive designs of the Entente Powers. No evidence of the existence of a treaty of actual pre-war alliance between these powers has ever been produced. There existed at the outbreak of hostilities by the German declaration of war no written compact between Great Britain and the other Entente Powers. Sir Edward Grey openly avowed that if war developed between Austria-Hungary and Russia, England would not intervene.<sup>1</sup> Even on August 1st, after Germany had declared war on Russia, King George V, in answer to President Poincaré's appeal for the assurance of British aid, replied, without defining the

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 25. See Illustrative Document No. XVIII.



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attitude of his country beyond declaring that it was open to discussion:

“You may be assured that the present situation in Europe has been the cause of much anxiety and preoccupation to me, and I am glad to think that our two governments have worked so amiably together in endeavoring to find a peaceful solution of the question at issue.

“It would be a source of real satisfaction to me if our united efforts were to meet with success, and I am still not without hope that the terrible events which seem so near may be averted.”<sup>1</sup>

Here is no sign of a hostile compact against Germany. Strange language indeed is this for an arch-conspirator, when the hour had come to strike! And yet there is no word of accusation or complaint on the part of France or Russia in response to this detached manner of regarding an alleged common warlike undertaking. No prior engagement even of mutual defense is mentioned, no obligation of England is insisted upon, either by France or Russia. When the alleged “conspiracy” is uncovered by events, there is disclosed nothing but sincerity, dignity, innocence, and a striving after peace.

How, then, shall the determinists support their thesis? Shall they say the Kaiser was pushed into war by German necessities? In what category are these necessities to be found? The German people were not starving. Their industry and their trade were never more prosperous. Their ships were on

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, Appendix, I, V, No. 2.

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every sea—but provided with a secret code of warning to seek refuge when war would break out—and their goods were in every market. Great Britain was their best customer.

But the future, it will be said, had to be provided for. Territory for expansion and colonies for raw material were needed by Germany.

There was unquestionably room for Germans in other parts of the world. They were already to be found everywhere, and everywhere were among the most prosperous inhabitants. The other countries were not refusing German industry cotton, copper, tropical products; in short, whatever they needed at the general market prices.

But these facts, I am told, are quite irrelevant. What Germany wanted was that these things should be German, that they should belong to Germany, and that Germans spreading over the world should not cease to be Germans. They must still belong to the Empire, not be lost by absorption in other nations.

We come, then, in the end, not to a natural, but only to a political necessity. In essence it is, as we shall see, merely a dynastic ambition. An empire to be extended, not because its people cannot otherwise find homes and prosperity in the world, but because they must continue, however numerous they may become, to adhere to one political system and furnish additional strength to one particular government. They are needed as taxpayers and as soldiers. Therefore other peoples must be annexed

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to the German Empire in order that Germans may remain German subjects.

Regarding Germans for a moment not as subjects of a government, but merely as human beings, or as a people, these alleged "necessities" wholly disappear. It is only when contemplated from a governmental point of view that new territory and new colonies are "necessities." They are, no doubt, necessities to the unlimited growth of an empire. In truth, they will always be thus necessary, no matter how great an empire may become. Its only ultimate limit, upon this theory, is the whole surface of the earth.

Primarily, therefore, the interest in imperialism is dynastic. It is the natural desire of the sovereign to enlarge his realm. In a secondary sense, it is true, his subjects also may, to a certain extent, find an interest in this expansion. Honors, immunities, and possessions accompany the growth of empire. Those to whom these fall become partners in the enterprise. But it is none the less a predatory adventure, in the spoils of which only a few participate. That the people as a whole profit by such dynastic conquests is an illusion.

However we regard the matter, whether from the natural or the political point of view, it is evident that responsibility for the World War cannot be thrown back upon purely natural causes. The decisions that have produced it are acts of personal will.

Who, then, is to be held accountable?

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When a conflagration is voluntarily started we cannot throw the blame for the occurrence upon the chemistry of combustion. We seek the incendiary. And if we mean that other conflagrations shall not occur, we render it impossible for him to repeat his act.

It is in this spirit that the President of the United States, as the voice of the American people, has addressed the people of Germany. He has assumed that Kaiser William II, having been empowered by the German people to declare war, and by doing so having automatically brought many nations into it, is responsible for the consequences. The German people have decided to share this responsibility; and they, in turn, must, therefore, be regarded as accountable.

It is just that they should be so held; and, in the great assize that is to be faced in the peace conference, this question of responsibility must be met.

The German nation is great and powerful. To treat it as a criminal is not an easy or a welcome task, but it must either voluntarily suppress this menace to the world's peace or be itself regarded as such a menace.

The German people have thought it wise to link the future of their national development with the power of the army and navy rather than to base it upon understandings. They have believed that the policy that has made Prussia the master of Germany could make Germany the master of Europe, and perhaps of the world. That Prussia was

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from the beginning a military and not an industrial and commercial state, such as Germany has become, was overlooked. A military state can afford to challenge its neighbors and browbeat its competitors. It does not intend to make bargains, but to take what it wants wherever its force can prevail. An industrial and commercial state, however, must retain the confidence of its customers. It cannot win them by superior force.

The alliance of great business with military policies in the German Empire has proved an unfortunate form of enterprise. The preponderant partner has wrecked German business. Conquest has, apparently, opened new fields of exploitation; but the world-market has been lost because the world's confidence has been forfeited. Only a new and reorganized Germany can ever regain it.

The greatest misfortune of the German people will not consist in a military defeat, which might be to their own advantage in the future through a better international status, or even the enforced payment of indemnities for the devastations wrought by the invasion of other countries. The faith of mankind in Germany's integrity as a nation will be a far more serious loss. However much men may differ regarding matters of detail, whatever varying interpretations may be placed upon diplomatic or other documents, whatever light may be thrown upon the beginning or the conduct of the war by future disclosures, the impartial portion of mankind is convinced that the Great War, with

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all its horrors and sufferings, could have been avoided by Germany, and by Germany alone, without material or moral loss.

In his book on *Der Weltkrieg*, the Swiss writer Zurlinden has pointed out four possibilities of peace which lay before Kaiser William II in July, 1914.

"1. Germany," he says, "declared its disinterestedness in the Austro-Serbian conflict. The Treaty of the Triple Alliance did not bind Germany to furnish military aid to her ally unless attacked, whereas Austria-Hungary was the aggressor. This interpretation of the alliance was uncomplainingly admitted by Germany when Italy, under the same obligations as Germany to Austria-Hungary, declared her neutrality.

"2. Germany could have declared that Austria-Hungary should content herself with the extraordinary submission consented to in Serbia's reply to the ultimatum, and that there should be no war.

"3. The Austro-Serbian conflict, in so far as it was not fully conciliated in the reply to the ultimatum, could be submitted to a European conference; or

"4. To the International Tribunal at The Hague."

To all these possibilities the Kaiser had opposed an emphatic "No," and had decided upon war.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zurlinden, *Der Weltkrieg*, I, p. 385; who quotes Naumann, *Mitteleuropa*, pp. 168, 169, as follows: "When last summer the Austrian Hereditary Prince and his wife were slain by a young criminal, there was in the terms of the treaty no necessity for the German Empire to trouble itself on account of this procedure. That Kaiser William and his admirers nevertheless did so was more than a treaty obligation. . . . The World War is, therefore, more than a war resulting from a *casus fœderis* (*Vertragskrieg*), it is a community of feeling (*Gesinnungsgemeinschaft*), as if we were already grown together." See also Illustrative Document No. XVII.



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But the whole fault of William II does not consist in declining to embrace any of these possibilities of peace. A basis of peace had, in his own judgment, as he himself declares in his message to the President of the United States, already been accepted by Austria-Hungary. We now know that, although this proposal was in his possession, he did not even communicate it to Nicholas II, although the Czar implored him not to consider mobilization as equivalent to war. Instead, without waiting even a day for negotiation, he suddenly declared war, when he had in his twelve-hour ultimatum only threatened mobilization; knowing, at the time, that unless Russia was cowed by his threat into submission to his arbitrary will, this resort to war on Russia would involve France as well—upon whose unprotected frontiers his troops had been preparing to advance—unless Great Britain should obtain French neutrality.

The question has arisen, and has been discussed, Would not the Imperial German Reichstag, if it had the sole determination of the issue, have decided precisely as the Kaiser did? Hugo Kramer has expressed the opinion that it would, and he advances as a reason for this conclusion the statement that the vote of credit for the conduct of the war was equivalent to a vote of approval of the war.<sup>1</sup>

There is, perhaps, no human being on earth so fiendish as consciously to have willed *this* war, as it has developed. It is probably true that every

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Zurlinden, p. 386.

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German, and William II first of all, could say with perfect honesty, "I did not will this war." What was willed by William II was not *this* war, but a swift, short, victorious war which would secure large indemnities, add some coveted territories to Germany, and enable the German Emperor, whenever he pleased to do so, to dictate the terms of peace, thus placing him in a position of complete mastery on the Continent preparatory to another swift, short war that would obtain for Germany the desired supremacy on the sea.

Even reduced to the lowest terms, the resolution of Kaiser William II to support Austria-Hungary in the determination to crush Serbia and obtain the mastery in the Balkan Peninsula at the risk of a general European war involves a great responsibility, and reveals the spirit in which war upon Russia was declared. Assuming that the government of the little Slav state was responsible for efforts to frustrate the plans of Austria-Hungary, and even that some Serbian officials were connected with a plot to assassinate the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife—which has not been clearly established—and that chastisement, even severe chastisement, was deserved, an assault upon the Serbian people as a whole without a trial, or even an impartial investigation, was not a civilized method of procedure. It was a condemnation to death of the innocent along with the guilty, and made no distinction between them. The violation of Belgian neutrality by armed invasion was of the

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same moral quality, magnified to an open disregard of a solemn pledge. The needless resort to war and the disregard of a binding covenant, in order to render war successful, cannot be explained away by any form of natural determination on the part of the nation. They were not "necessities," they were voluntary national crimes.

Even with the memory of Bismarck and his pride in the alteration of the Ems telegram in mind, we cannot imagine that, in 1888, the German people would have supported the German Emperor in the course pursued by him in 1914. In 1888, when William II ascended the throne, as we have seen in the first chapter of this book, such an exploit as was lightly entered into in 1914 was precisely what the German people contemplated with dread and aversion. But in the intervening thirty years the character of Germany has changed. It has been thoroughly Prussianized. A hasty plunge into a foreign war was accepted without internal obstruction. The nation that had trembled with apprehension for what the impulsive and erratic young monarch might do ended by placing its destinies entirely in his hands.

It did this with perfect comprehension of what it was doing. William II never concealed his ambitions from his own people. What he did was to induce the nation to share them. A different kind of an emperor would have produced a different Germany. William II trained his people to war and to believe in war. It was the tradition of his

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House and the foundation of his throne. An industrial Germany, a commercial Germany, might have been developed without the military note being always sounded. The inclinations of other nations—"the satisfied nations" if one chooses to name them so—might have been utilized at the great peace conferences and upon the occasions when similar overtures were made, and sincerely made; but William II was never disposed to accept them. It was not the Prussian idea.

And so, more and more as the years went by, Germany came to link its future development with the power of its army and its navy. The Reichstag in 1914 had no idea that the question of peace or war was within its jurisdiction. The subject had been placed beyond its deliberation. As for the people, they had nothing to do with such matters. They were not concerned with the equities, or the moralities, or the expediency of war. Their duty was simply to do what they were told to do. They were informed that there was a hostile conspiracy against Germany, that an attack by foreign powers had "forced the sword" into the hands of their Emperor, and that they must fight for their existence. This they believed, and upon this they obediently acted. The All-Highest had spoken. It was enough.

Clearly, a war-machine thus constructed is a menace to the world. No nation should enter upon a war without knowing why war is necessary and without resort to all available means of avoiding

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it. Dynastic wars, or wars primarily actuated by dynastic motives, cannot, of course, be publicly debated beforehand, but all issues affecting the national interests can be.

In the past, even under confessedly dynastic rule, Germans of independent mind have thought thus, and have believed their convictions worth expressing. Immanuel Kant, for example, living under a Prussian king, had the courage to write:

“A state should be so internally organized that, not the head of the state, to whom war (since he carries it on at the expense of another, namely the people) costs nothing, but the people, to whom he himself is a charge, should have the determining voice whether war should or should not be.”<sup>1</sup>

And in another place he adds that, under a constitution which is not republican, where the subject is not a citizen, the case is the most unfortunate imaginable; because the ruler is not a fellow-citizen, but the proprietor of the state, and is in no way made to suffer loss with regard to his table, his hunting, his pleasure castles, and his court life, and may therefore regard war as a kind of pastime to be undertaken for trivial reasons, the justification of which may be left without anxiety to the ingenuity of the ever-ready diplomatic corps.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kant, *Über den Gemeinsplatz: Das mag in der Theorie gut sein*, p. 396.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, *Von Ewigen Freunden*, p. 436. It is possible that Kant, in writing of the ingenuity of the Diplomatic Corps, had in mind the marginal note which Frederick the Great on November 7, 1749, addressed to his minister, Podiawils, saying that it was time in secret to look up the legal claims to Silesia, as he had already given his orders to his troops.

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Kant may not have realized the practical difficulties involved in submitting the question of peace or war to the decision of the whole body of citizens; but he perceived not only the injustice to the people of a state, but the danger to the peace of the world, in leaving such a decision to the arbitrary will of a ruler. While no rule regarding the declaration of war can be enforced upon a sovereign state otherwise than by war, it is not improbable that every free people will eventually, in their own interest, place the war-machine under a supervision where war cannot be determined upon at the pleasure of a single person, however trustworthy, by a mere exchange of telegrams, without public knowledge of the circumstances in which the act is performed.

If, therefore, it be true that the Imperial German Reichstag would have taken the same course as that followed by William II, who had deliberately determined, according to Doctor Mühlon, to run the risk of a general European war if Russia mobilized, and yet for weeks kept this resolution a secret, except from his circle of confidants, the Reichstag would be the most extraordinary representative parliamentary body in the world.

By the provision of the Imperial German Constitution, the Reichstag has nothing to do with determining peace or war. Article LXIII declares: "The entire land force of the Empire will form a single army, which in war and peace is under the command of the Emperor." Article LXIV reads: "All German troops are bound to obey the com-



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mands of the Emperor unconditionally. This duty is to be specified in the Banner-oath." This article further provides that the Emperor may select for appointments in the Imperial service "from the officers of all the contingents of the Imperial army;" thus empowering him to place Prussian officers, "with or without promotion," in command of all the troops. Even without a declaration of war, therefore, the Emperor has the whole military force of Germany at his personal disposition.

Under these circumstances, the mere formal declaration of war is of subordinate importance. By Article LXVIII, "the Emperor may, when public safety is threatened in the Territories of the Confederation, declare any part thereof to be in a state of war." In this case, "the rules of the Prussian law of June 4, 1851, remain in force." Whoever, therefore, in the German Empire successfully disputes the authority of the Emperor has first to defeat the German army.

"The Emperor," according to Article XI, "has to represent the Empire internationally, to declare war, and to conclude peace in the name of the Empire." When it comes to a formal declaration of war against a foreign power, "the consent of the Bundesrat is necessary, unless an attack on the territory or the coast of the Confederation has taken place."

In the declaration of war on Russia of August 1, 1914, there is no pretense that an attack had been made on German territory. In his message to the

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President of the United States of August 10th, Kaiser William speaks of his own intention to "attack" France, unless Great Britain can secure and will guarantee her neutrality, but makes no charge of any attack made by France. As regards Belgium, he had only "news," not "knowledge," of French violation; and the reports of bombs dropped upon Nuremberg and other German cities by French aviators have been proved by German testimony to have been pure inventions.<sup>1</sup>

Having no responsibility for the declaration of war, it is not remarkable that the Imperial German Reichstag, upon the Kaiser's mere requisition, and his assertion that the Empire was in danger, promptly voted the credits necessary for conducting the war without inquiring into the details of the international situation. In this all parties were united. Even the Social Democrats, as a party, did not refuse support. There could be no justifiable dissent on a question of national defense. When later Germany, with her own soil free from invasion, was seen to be fighting an aggressive campaign on the territory of ten other nations, the question naturally arose how this could be called a "war of defense." The answer, of course, was that German valor and military efficiency had beaten back the waves of a murderous conspiracy!

If, however, it had been the constitutional duty of the Reichstag to examine into the merits of the

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<sup>1</sup> See an account of this testimony in Illustrative Document No. XV.

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case, and to bear the responsibility of choosing between peace and war, is it conceivable that a representative body, charged with the obligation to consider and protect all the varied interests of the German people, would have pursued the course taken by Kaiser William II?

As a matter of fact, the members of the Reichstag were for the most part ignorant of the diplomatic proceedings that were taking place. Although the Austro-Hungarian ultimatum to Serbia was known to the Kaiser, and had been personally revised and strengthened by him, it had not been seen before it was sent even by the Imperial German Foreign Office. It was not publicly known in Germany what unexampled demands had been made upon Serbia—demands so impossible of acceptance that Sir Edward Grey, who was not sympathetic toward Serbia, said he “had never before seen one state address to another independent state a document of so formidable a character.<sup>1</sup> So formidable, indeed, was this document that it was intended to force a reply of non-compliance, and thus to furnish an excuse for war on Serbia.<sup>2</sup> The reply of the

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<sup>1</sup> British Blue Book, I, No. 5.

<sup>2</sup> “From the first inception of the Austro-German plan of concerted action,” says Dr. E. J. Dillon, who was at Vienna and in close contact with high authorities, “the parts of each of the actors were assigned. Serbia was to be stung into utterances or action which would warrant resort to an Austrian punitive expedition. . . . Although the Austrian ultimatum to Serbia was so worded and the time accorded for a reply so limited as to insure its rejection, misgivings were, as we saw, felt and uttered in Vienna and Budapest that Serbia would knuckle down and execute the humiliating behests of the Ballplatz. For this was a consummation which was deemed highly undesirable. . . . Hence the

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Serbian government, bending to the storm and asking for adjudication on two points only, was withheld from public knowledge in Germany and characterized in the German press merely as "wholly unacceptable." Five days after the reply was made the Russian chargé d'affaires at Berlin reported to his government:

"The Wolff Bureau [the official news agency] has not published the text of the Serbian reply, although it was communicated to them. Up to the present this note has not appeared *in extenso* in any of the local papers, which, to all appearances, do not wish to publish it in their columns, being well aware of the calming effect which it would have on German readers."<sup>1</sup>

Having in hand the formula of peace, needing only Russia's acceptance—which, as a fact, was in substance already assured—would the Reichstag have failed, as William II failed, to communicate it to the Russian Government while Nicholas II was solemnly protesting that mobilization did not mean war? It was not until November 9, 1916, more than two years after the war had been in progress, that Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, in response to a

exhaustive precautions adopted for the purpose of provoking a negative answer to the ultimatum from Belgrade."—*A Scrap of Paper*, pp. 98, 99. The Serbian reply was received by the Austrian Minister at 5.58 P.M., on July 25th. He left Belgrade on the regular train at 6.30 P.M., as he had previously informed his government he would do. (Austrian Red Book, I, No. 22.) He had, therefore, only thirty-two minutes, after receiving the reply, in which to read the note and reach the train, without inquiring how the Austrian Foreign Office would regard the reply. He had no need to make that inquiry.

<sup>1</sup> Russian Orange Book, I, No. 46.

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challenge by Sir Edward Grey, stating that he had received from Vienna an approval of this formula, admitted that this was true; but he did not pretend that it had ever been sent by the Kaiser or by himself to St. Petersburg. The Russian order of mobilization, he claimed, had rendered peace impossible. The German public was kept in complete ignorance of the efforts of Sir Edward Grey to preserve peace and of Germany's virtual rejection of them. Knowing all the facts, and especially the plea of Nicholas II for further negotiation, would or could the Reichstag have concealed from the public this possibility of peace, and thus have precipitated Europe into war?

Analyze the situation as we may, we are always brought back to the "necessities" created by Kaiser William II's desire for prestige and the pressure of the military camarilla of which he was the head.

Into the Kaiser's personal psychology, perhaps, we have no right as foreigners to enter. Every nation must be permitted to choose to whose hands it will confide its destinies. The question of William II's mental balance is a delicate one for any one to touch upon. Whether he is sane or not is hardly our business. Experts have differed on that subject. There is, in fact, no real objective standard of sanity. The same conduct may be counted sane or insane in different circumstances and by different persons. As a rule, actions and opinions that are violently discordant with our own are liable

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to be classed as wanting in sanity. Most excesses naturally fall under this judgment in well-balanced minds.

A distinguished alienist, Doctor Charles Mercier, offers some illuminating comments on this subject which are deserving of consideration. In forming an estimate of the Kaiser he says: "We must take into consideration not what he thinks or believes, which we can only conjecture, but what he does, as to which we have more or less trustworthy information; and in estimating his conduct we must never lose sight of the circumstances in which he acts and never fail to take account of these circumstances. *The dominating circumstance of the Kaiser's life is that he is the German Emperor.*"<sup>1</sup>

This writer does well to insist that this circumstance, which is likely to be overlooked, should be constantly taken into account. It is true that, when he is not playing the part of the Kaiser, William II is an agreeable and even a charming man, whose intense human interest renders him fascinating to those who are subject to personal influences.

Applying his principle to the German Emperor, Doctor Mercier continues:

"If the English King-Emperor were to act as the German Emperor acts; if he were to change his dress a dozen times a day; if he were forever boasting and bragging and calling God to witness

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<sup>1</sup> Article in *Land and Water*, reprinted in *The Living Age*, No. 3,867.



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what a splendid creature he is; if he were forever rattling his saber and blustering about mailed fists and shining armor; if he were to order his soldiers to give no quarter, and so forth—we might well question his sanity; for the aim of a King must be to inspire the respect, the loyalty, and the devotion of his subjects; and if a King of England were to behave thus, he would inspire only dislike, disgust, and contempt. But the Kaiser is not King of England. He is German Emperor, and the Germans like his conduct. It suits them. The more he brags and postures and prances before them, the more they admire him and the more loyal and devoted they become. There is no evidence of madness, then, in this.”

While exempting the Kaiser from madness, Doctor Mercier does not hesitate to assimilate him to another type of mental aberration. “There are,” he says, “undoubtedly, persons who are born without a rudiment of the moral sense and who grow up without its ever becoming developed in them.” The Kaiser’s conduct, this writer contends, suggests that he belongs to this class. Certainly being born heir to a throne does not exempt one from this classification, but it greatly enlarges the field of action. The devastating of Belgium, the murder of Miss Cavell and Captain Fryatt, the sinking of the *Lusitania* and neutral ships with their innocent non-combatant passengers, including women and children, Doctor Mercier affirms, are regarded by William II as “quite right and proper and justi-

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fiable, and in conformity with moral law as he understands it; but the reprisal bombardment of German towns is a scandalous and abominable infraction of the laws of war." "Other well-recognized traits of the instinctive criminal are," he continues, "the sentimentality that alternates with cruelty, colossal egotism, naïve and clamorous vanity, and a craving for notoriety, which displays itself in a passion for the lime-light and histrionic display. Moreover, the instinctive criminal is very often intensely religious. . . . When about to commit murder he will go to mass and pray for a blessing on his enterprise; and when he has conducted a successful burglary he will make a thank-offering to the God who has assisted him and held him scatheless."

This is a very impressive indictment; but there is a qualification, I think, which in the interest of scientific accuracy should be added. William II would not consider any of the enormities ordered and rewarded by him as right and justifiable unless authorized by himself. He would not, as a private person, perform any of the acts referred to as criminal, or approve of any private person performing them. They become right because they are ordered by the German Emperor.

There is in the Kaiser's mind a reason for this attitude. It is based upon the union of three elements: the nature of the state, the Hohenzollern tradition of divine right, and the Imperial German Constitution.

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William II is, in the strict sense, not the author of any of these. They are parts of the inheritance which forms the substance of his obsession—the idea of the German Emperor's mission and authority.

Long before William II came to the throne the Prussian conception of the state had been definitely formulated. Hegel had furnished its metaphysical basis, and Lasson had depicted its essential features. Its substance was armed force. Says Lasson:

“Force is the characteristic feature of right. In international intercourse, in consequence, there are, and can be no laws. . . . Between states there can be no thought of law or right. . . . There is no right where there is no law, no judge, no superior compelling force. . . . States have absolutely no mutual duties, because, as between them, there is no law or right. . . . There is no commandment of right to observe political treaties. . . . Infraction of the right by force is a crime in civil life; a state can commit no crime. . . . The state when at peace is no real state; it is only when in war that the state reveals its full significance. . . . Peace organization and all regulations to curb impulse are the tomb of courage.”<sup>1</sup>

The Hohenzollern tradition gives to these abstract statements a concrete embodiment. The head of the state rules by his own right through divine appointment. The Imperial German Consti-

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<sup>1</sup> Lasson, *Das Culturideal und der Krieg*, Berlin, 1868, pp. 7, 15.

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tution facilitates the exercise of this right by making it the duty of the army, in peace and in war, to obey unconditionally the German Emperor, in whom the whole system centers.

As an individual person, William II is understood to lead a virtuous life. As German Emperor, he is subject to no law. The state, for which he acts, is above the law. Its only rule of action springs from its "necessities." The key to the contradictions in the conduct of William II is found in Doctor Mercier's statement, "The dominating circumstance of the Kaiser's life is that he is the German Emperor."

Through the impulsive and even fanatical temperament of William II the Prussian inheritance has been brought to its logical conclusion. His father, Frederick III, who probably could not have lived up to the idea of a German Emperor as William II has conceived it, quite certainly would not have developed all its latent possibilities. His grandfather, William I, did not, in fact, live up to it. He gloried in being King of Prussia, but he was more or less mystified by the Empire, which in his time was not yet Prussianized, and which, nevertheless, he could not understand as being anything else than an extended Prussia. But William II was from the beginning both Prussian and Imperial. He took the rôle of German Emperor seriously.

What the world has to cope with in dealing with Germany is not merely William II as a person. The accession of the Crown-Prince Frederick William

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would not improve the international situation. So long as the Prussian doctrine regarding the nature of the state is retained, even the complete democratization of German political institutions would not restore the world's confidence in the purposes and the promises of the German Empire. The real evil is the mystical, non-moral Prussian conception of the state as an entity existing solely for its own aggrandizement, unrestrained either by moral or conventional obligations. So long as it is believed and taught that the state is power and can do no wrong there can be no international security. The main advantage of democracy over autocracy as a form of human government is that, when accorded its true representative character, it renders political power responsible to those who must bear the burdens which the existence of the state necessarily imposes. It brings public action to the test of the public conscience. But if that is debased by the belief that in its outward relations the state is above all law and is bound by no duties, then a democracy affords no safeguard of peace or of justice. It merely exchanges the selfishness of the mass for the egotism of a monarch, and substitutes for the vagaries of a single autocrat the craving, the violence, and the irresponsibility of a multitude.

That which creates our interest in Kaiser William II is not any merely personal qualities that mark him as a man. It is that in playing the part of German Emperor he has exposed to the view of all mankind the danger that inheres in the Prussian

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doctrine of the state. His personal faith and teaching have only brought to maturity its deadly fruitage; for, believing himself endowed by special divine appointment with the immunities of the irresponsible state, in lighting the torch of a World War he has held himself without accountability to the standards and judgments of civilized men.



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### No. I

THE Royal Order of September, 1852, had regulated the intercourse between the Prussian Ministers and the Crown. It provided that only the Minister President, and not the individual Ministers, should personally consult the Emperor regarding the duties of their office. William II, knowing that Bismarck would oppose the abrogation of this order, nevertheless determined to revoke it. Bismarck's comments on this subject in his letter of resignation are as follows:

If each individual Minister can receive commands from his Sovereign without previous arrangements with his colleagues, a coherent policy, for which some one is to be responsible, is an impossibility. It would be impossible for any of the Ministers and especially for the Minister President, to bear the constitutional responsibility for the Cabinet as a whole. Such a provision as that contained in the Order of 1852 could be dispensed with under the absolute monarchy and could also be dispensed with to-day if we returned to absolutism without ministerial responsibility. But according to the constitutional arrangements now legally in force the control of the Cabinet by a President under the Order of 1852 is indispensable.

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### No. II

The first delegate of the United States to the First Hague Peace Conference, which met on May 18, 1899, was the Hon. Andrew D. White, at that time American ambassador at Berlin. The following extracts from his account of the Conference are important, as throwing a clear light upon the attitude of the German Empire in that assembly. Under date of May 24th, Mr. White said:

Meeting Count Münster, who, after M. de Staal [President of the Conference], is very generally considered the most important personage here, we discussed the subject of arbitration. To my great regret, I found him entirely opposed to it, or, at least, entirely opposed to any well-developed plan. He did not say that he would oppose a moderate plan for voluntary arbitration, but he insisted that arbitration must be injurious to Germany; that Germany is prepared for war as no other country is or can be; that she can mobilize her army in ten days; and that neither France, Russia, nor any other power can do this. Arbitration, he said, would simply give rival powers time to put themselves in readiness, and would therefore be a great disadvantage to Germany.

Under date of June 9th, he wrote:

It now appears that the German Emperor is determined to oppose the whole scheme of arbitration, and will have nothing to do with any plan for a regular tribunal, whether as given in the British or the American scheme. This news comes from various sources, and is confirmed by the fact that, in the subcommittee, one of the German delegates, Professor Zorn of Königsberg, who had become very earnest in behalf of arbitration, now says that he may not be able to vote for it. There are also signs that the German Emperor is influencing the minds of his allies—the sovereigns of Austria, Italy, Turkey, and Roumania—leading them to oppose it.

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On the 16th, Mr. White made this entry in his diary:

This morning Count Münster called and seemed much excited by the fact that he had received a despatch from Berlin in which the German Government—which, of course, means the Emperor—had strongly and finally declared against everything like an arbitration tribunal. He was clearly disconcerted by this too liberal acceptance of his own earlier views, and said that he had sent to M. de Staal insisting that the meeting of the subcommittee on arbitration, which had been appointed for this day (Friday) should be adjourned on some pretext until next Monday; “for,” said he, “if the session takes place to-day, Zorn must make the declaration in behalf of Germany, which these new instructions order him to make, and that would be a misfortune.”

Later it was agreed that Professor Zorn, of the German delegation, and Mr. Holls, secretary of the American delegation, be sent to Berlin to procure a change in the German instructions. Mr. White sent to Prince von Bülow, then Imperial Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, a personal letter in which he said:

It is generally said here that Germany is opposed to the whole thing, that she is utterly hostile to anything like arbitration, and that she will do all in her power, either alone or through her allies, to thwart every feasible plan of providing for a tribunal which shall give some hope to the world of settling some of the many difficulties between nations otherwise than by bloodshed.

No rational man here expects all wars to be ended by anything done here; no one proposes to submit to any such tribunal questions involving the honor of any nation or the inviolability of its territory, or any of those things which nations feel instinctively must be reserved for their own decision. Nor does any thinking man here propose obligatory arbitration in any case, save, possibly, in

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sundry petty matters where such arbitration would be a help to the ordinary administration of all governments; and, even as to these, they can be left out of the scheme if your Government seriously desires it.

The great thing is that there be provision made for easily calling together a court of arbitration which shall be seen of all nations, indicate a sincere desire to promote peace, and, in some measure, relieve the various peoples of the fear which so heavily oppresses them all—the dread of an outburst of war at any moment.

On the 23d, Mr. White makes the following record:

But the great matter of the day was the news, which has not yet been made public, that Prince Hohenlohe, the German Chancellor, has come out strongly for the arbitration tribunal, and has sent instructions here accordingly. This is a great gain, and seems to remove one of the worst stumbling-blocks. But we will have to pay for this removal, probably, by giving up section 10 of the present plan, which includes a system of obligatory arbitration in various minor matters,—a system which would be of use to the world in many ways.

The outcome was, as Mr. White predicted, that while the idea of a purely voluntary tribunal was accepted, “the Imperial German Government insisted that the general treaty of arbitration should be dropped as the price of this concession, and it was so dropped.”—*Scott's Survey*, p. 321.

### No. III

The complete text of the *Daily Telegraph* interview is as follows:

We have received the following communication from a source of such unimpeachable authority that we can with-

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out hesitation commend the obvious message which it conveys to the attention of the public.

Discretion is the first and last quality requisite in a diplomatist, and should still be observed by those who, like myself, have long passed from public into private life. Yet moments sometimes occur in the history of nations when a calculated indiscretion proves of the highest public service, and it is for that reason that I have decided to make known the substance of a lengthy conversation which it was my recent privilege to have with his Majesty the German Emperor. I do so in the hope that it may help to remove that obstinate misconception of the character of the Kaiser's feelings towards England which, I fear, is deeply rooted in the ordinary Englishman's breast. It is the Emperor's sincere wish that it should be eradicated. He has given repeated proofs of his desire by word and deed. But, to speak frankly, his patience is sorely tried now that he finds himself so continually misrepresented, and has so often experienced the mortification of finding that any momentary improvement of relations is followed by renewed outbursts of prejudice, and a prompt return to the old attitude of suspicion.

As I have said, his Majesty honored me with a long conversation, and spoke with impulsive and unusual frankness. "You English," he said, "are mad, mad as March hares! What has come over you that you are so completely given over to suspicions quite unworthy of a great nation? What more can I do than I have done? I declared with all the emphasis at my command, in my speech at Guildhall, that my heart is set upon peace, and that it is one of my dearest wishes to live on the best of terms with England. Have I ever been false to my word? Falsehood and prevarication are alien to my nature. My actions ought to speak for themselves, but you listen not to them but to those who misinterpret and distort them. That is a personal insult which I feel and resent. To be forever misjudged, to have my repeated offers of friendship weighed and scrutinized with jealous, mistrustful eyes, taxes my patience severely. I have said time after time that I am a friend of England, and your Press—or, at least, a considerable section of it—bids the people

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of England refuse my proffered hand, and insinuates that the other holds a dagger. How can I convince a nation against its will?

"I repeat," continued his Majesty, "that I am the friend of England, but you make things difficult for me. My task is not of the easiest. The prevailing sentiment among large sections of the middle and lower classes of my own people is not friendly to England. I am, therefore, so to speak, in a minority in my own land, but it is a minority of the best elements, just as it is in England with respect to Germany. That is another reason why I resent your refusal to accept my pledged word that I am the friend of England. I strive without ceasing to improve relations, and you retort that I am your arch-enemy. You make it very hard for me. Why is it?"

Thereupon I ventured to remind his Majesty that not England alone, but the whole of Europe had viewed with disapproval the recent action of Germany in allowing the German Consul to return from Tangier to Fez, and in anticipating the joint action of France and Spain by suggesting to the Powers that the time had come for Europe to recognize Muley Hafid as the new Sultan of Morocco.

His Majesty made a gesture of impatience. "Yes," he said, "that is an excellent example of the way in which German action is misrepresented. First, then, as regards the journey of Dr. Vassel. The German Government, in sending Dr. Vassel back to his post at Fez, was only guided by the wish that he should look after the private interests of German subjects in that city, who cried for help and protection after the long absence of a Consular representative. And why not send him? Are those who charge Germany with having stolen a march on the other Powers aware that the French Consular representative had already been in Fez for several months when Dr. Vassel set out? Then, as to the recognition of Muley Hafid. The Press of Europe has complained with much acerbity that Germany ought not to have suggested his recognition until he had notified to Europe his full acceptance of the Act of Algeciras, as being binding upon him as Sultan of Morocco and successor of his brother. My answer is that Muley Hafid notified the Powers to that



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effect weeks ago, before the decisive battle was fought. He sent, as far back as the middle of last July, an identical communication to the Governments of Germany, France, and Great Britain, containing an explicit acknowledgment that he was prepared to recognize all the obligations towards Europe which were incurred by Abdul Aziz during his Sultanate. The German Government interpreted that communication as a final and authoritative expression of Muley Hafid's intentions, and therefore they considered that there was no reason to wait until he had sent a second communication, before recognizing him as the *de facto* Sultan of Morocco, who had succeeded to his brother's throne by right of victory in the field."

I suggested to his Majesty that an important and influential section of the German Press had placed a very different interpretation upon the action of the German Government, and, in fact, had given it their effusive approbation precisely because they saw in it a strong act instead of mere words, and a decisive indication that Germany was once more about to intervene in the shaping of events in Morocco. "There are mischief-makers," replied the Emperor, "in both countries. I will not attempt to weigh their relative capacity for misrepresentation. But the facts are as I have stated. There has been nothing in Germany's recent action with regard to Morocco which runs contrary to the explicit declaration of my love of peace which I made both at Guildhall and in my latest speech at Strassburg."

His Majesty then reverted to the subject uppermost in his mind—his proved friendship for England. "I have referred," he said, "to the speeches in which I have done all that a sovereign can to proclaim my goodwill. But, as actions speak louder than words, let me also refer to my acts. It is commonly believed in England that throughout the South Africa War Germany was hostile to her. German opinion undoubtedly was hostile—bitterly hostile. But what of official Germany? Let my critics ask themselves what brought to a sudden stop, and, indeed, to absolute collapse, the European tour of the Boer delegates who were striving to obtain European intervention? They were fêted in Holland: France gave them a rapturous

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welcome. They wished to come to Berlin, where the German people would have crowned them with flowers. But when they asked me to receive them—I refused. The agitation immediately died away, and the delegation returned empty-handed. Was that, I ask, the action of a secret enemy?

“Again, when the struggle was at its height, the German Government was invited by the Governments of France and Russia to join with them in calling upon England to put an end to the war. The moment had come, they said, not only to save the Boer Republics, but also to humiliate England to the dust. What was my reply? I said that so far from Germany joining in any concerted European action to put pressure upon England and bring about her downfall, Germany would always keep aloof from politics that could bring her into complications with a Sea Power like England. Posterity will one day read the exact terms of the telegram—now in the archives of Windsor Castle—in which I informed the Sovereign of England of the answer I had returned to the Powers which then sought to compass her fall. Englishmen who now insult me by doubting my word should know what were my actions in the hour of their adversity.

“Nor was that all. Just at the time of your Black Week, in the December of 1899, when disasters followed one another in rapid succession, I received a letter from Queen Victoria, my revered grandmother, written in sorrow and affliction, and bearing manifest traces of the anxieties which were preying upon her mind and health. I at once returned a sympathetic reply. Nay, I did more. I bade one of my officers procure for me as exact an account as he could obtain of the number of combatants in South Africa on both sides, and of the actual position of the opposing forces. With the figures before me, I worked out what I considered to be the best plan of campaign under the circumstances, and submitted it to my General Staff for their criticism. Then I dispatched it to England, and that document, likewise, is among the State papers at Windsor Castle, awaiting the serenely impartial verdict of history. And, as a matter of curious coincidence, let me add that the plan which I formulated ran

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very much on the same line as that which was actually adopted by Lord Roberts and carried by him into successful operation. Was that, I repeat, the act of one who wished England ill? Let Englishmen be just and say!

“But, you will say, what of the German navy? Surely that is a menace to England! Against whom but England are my squadrons being prepared? If England is not in the minds of those Germans who are bent on creating a powerful fleet, why is Germany asked to consent to such new and heavy burdens of taxation? My answer is clear. Germany is a young and growing Empire. She has a world-wide commerce, which is rapidly expanding, and to which the legitimate ambition of patriotic Germans refuses to assign any bounds. Germany must have a powerful fleet to protect that commerce, and her manifold interests in even the most distant seas. She expects those interests to go on growing, and she must be able to champion them manfully in any quarter of the globe. Germany looks ahead. Her horizons stretch far away. She must be prepared for any eventualities in the Far East. Who can foresee what may take place in the Pacific in the days to come—days not so distant as some believe, but days, at any rate, for which all European Powers with Far Eastern interests ought steadily to prepare? Look at the accomplished rise of Japan; think of the possible national awakening of China; and then judge of the vast problems of the Pacific. Only those Powers which have great navies will be listened to with respect when the future of the Pacific comes to be solved; and if for that reason only Germany must have a powerful fleet. It may even be that England herself will be glad that Germany has a fleet when they speak together on the same side in the great debates of the future.”

Such was the purport of the Emperor's conversation. He spoke with all that earnestness which marks his manner when speaking on deeply pondered subjects. I would ask my fellow-countrymen who value the cause of peace to weigh what I have written, and to revise, if necessary, their estimate of the Kaiser and his friendship for England by his Majesty's own words. If they had enjoyed the privilege, which was mine, of hearing them spoken,

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they would doubt no longer either his Majesty's firm desire to live on the best of terms with England or his growing impatience at the persistent mistrust with which his offer of friendship is too often received.

### No. IV

The leaders of virtually all the parties in the Reichstag in some degree manifested their disapprobation of the Kaiser's statements.

Doctor Albrecht, speaking for the Socialists, demanded, "What is the Chancellor prepared to do to prevent such occurrences?"

Herr Bassermann, on behalf of the National Liberals, asked, "Is the Chancellor prepared to take constitutional responsibility for the publication of the utterances of his Majesty the Emperor in the *Daily Telegraph*?"

Doctor Ablass, of the Progressive group, after asserting that matters had become known "which indicate serious shortcomings in the management of foreign affairs that tended to affect unfavorably the foreign relations of the German Empire," inquired, "What does the Chancellor propose to do to prevent such occurrences?"

Even the Conservatives, through Prince von Hatzfeldt and Herr von Norman, demanded "further information regarding the circumstances that led to the publication of the Emperor's utterances in the English press," and called for "precautions" that it should not be repeated.

To these questions Prince von Bülow replied:

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Gentlemen, I shall not apply myself to every point which has just been raised by previous speakers. I have to consider the effect of my words abroad, and will not add to the great harm already caused by the publication in the *Daily Telegraph* ["Hear, hear!" on the Left and Socialists].

In reply to the interpellations submitted, I have to declare as follows:

His Majesty the Kaiser has at different times, and to different private English personalities, made private utterances which, linked together, have been published in the *Daily Telegraph*. I must suppose that not all details of the utterances have been correctly reproduced ["Hear, hear!" on the Right]. One I know is not correct; that is the story about the plan of campaign ["Hear, hear!" on the Right]. The plan in question was not a field campaign worked out in detail, but a purely academic [laughter among the Socialists]—Gentlemen, we are engaged in a serious discussion. The matters on which I speak are of an earnest kind and of great political importance—be good enough to listen to me quietly; I will be as brief as possible. I repeat therefore: the matter is not concerned with a field campaign worked out in detail, but with certain purely academic thoughts—I believe they are expressly described as "aphorisms"—about the conduct of war in general, which the Kaiser communicated in his interchange of correspondence with the late Queen Victoria. They are theoretical observations of no practical moment for the course of operations and the issue of the war. The chief of the General Staff, General von Moltke, and his predecessor, General Count Schlieffen, have declared that the General Staff reported to the Kaiser on the Boer War as on every war, great or small, which has occurred on the earth during the last ten years. Both, however, have given assurances that our General Staff never examined a field plan of campaign, or anything similar, prepared by the Kaiser in view of the Boer War, or forwarded such to England ["Hear, hear!" on the Right and Centre]. But I must also defend our policy against the reproach of being ambiguous *vis-à-vis* the Boers. We had—the documents show it—given timely



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warning to the Transvaal Government. We called its attention to the fact that in case of a war with England it would stand alone. We put it to her directly, and through the friendly Dutch Government in May, 1899, peacefully to come to an understanding with England, since there could be no doubt as to the result of a war.

In the question of intervention, the colors in the article of the *Daily Telegraph* are too thickly laid on. The thing itself had long been known ["Hear, hear!"]. It was some time previously the subject of controversy between the *National Review* and the *Deutsche Revue*. There can be no talk of a "revelation." It was said that the Imperial communication to the Queen of England, that Germany had not paid any attention to a suggestion for mediation or intervention, is a breach of the rules of diplomatic intercourse. Gentlemen, I will not recall indiscretions to memory, for they are frequent in the diplomatic history of all nations and at all times ["Quite right," on the Right]. The safest policy is perhaps that which need fear no indiscretion ["Quite right," on the Left]. To pass judgment in particular cases as to whether or not a breach of confidence has occurred, one must know more of the closely connected circumstances than appears in the article of the *Daily Telegraph*. The communication might be justified if it were attempted in one quarter or another to misrepresent our refusal or to throw suspicion on our attitude; circumstances may have previously happened which make allusion to the subject in a confidential correspondence at least intelligible. Gentlemen, I said before that many of the expressions used in the *Daily Telegraph* article are too strong. That is true, in the first place, of the passage where the Kaiser is represented as having said that the majority of the German people are inimically disposed towards England. Between Germany and England misunderstandings have occurred, serious, regrettable misunderstandings. But I am conscious of being at one with this entire honorable House in the view that the German people desire peaceful and friendly relations with England on the basis of mutual esteem [loud and general applause] and I take note that the speakers of all parties have spoken to-day in the



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same sense ["Quite right"]. The colors are also too thickly laid on in the place where reference is made to our interests in the Pacific Ocean. It has been construed in a sense hostile to Japan. Wrongly; we have never in the Far East thought of anything but this—to acquire and maintain for Germany a share of the commerce of Eastern Asia in view of the great economic future of this region. We are not thinking of maritime adventure there; aggressive tendencies have as little to say to our naval construction in the Pacific as in Europe. Moreover, his Majesty the Kaiser entirely agrees with the responsible director of foreign policy in the complete recognition of the high political importance which the Japanese people have achieved by their political strength and military ability. German policy does not regard it as its task to detract from the enjoyment and development of what Japan has acquired.

Gentlemen, I am, generally speaking, under the impression that if the material facts—completely, in their proper shape—were individually known, the sensation would be no great one; in this instance, too, the whole is more than all the parts taken together. But above all, gentlemen, one must not, while considering the material things, quite forget the psychology, the tendency. For two decades our Kaiser has striven, often under very difficult circumstances, to bring about friendly relations between Germany and England. This honest endeavor has had to contend with obstacles which would have discouraged many. The passionate partisanship of our people for the Boers was humanly intelligible; feeling for the weaker certainly appeals to the sympathy. But this partisanship has led to unjustified, and often unmeasured, attacks on England, and similarly unjust and hateful attacks have been made against Germany from the side of the English. Our aims were misconstrued, and hostile plans against England were foisted on us which we had never thought of. The Kaiser, rightly convinced that this state of things was a calamity for both countries and a danger for the civilized world, kept undeviatingly on the course he had adopted. The Kaiser is particularly wronged by any doubt as to the purity of his intentions, his ideal way of thinking, and his deep love of country.

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Gentlemen, let us avoid anything that looks like exaggerated seeking for foreign favor, anything that looks like uncertainty or obsequiousness. But I understand that the Kaiser, precisely because he was anxious to work zealously and honestly for good relationship with England, felt embittered at being ever the object of attacks casting suspicion on his best motives. Has one not gone so far as to attribute to his interest in the German fleet secret views against vital English interests—views which are far from him? And so in private conversation with English friends he sought to bring the proof, by pointing to his conduct, that in England he was misunderstood and wrongly judged.

Gentlemen, the perception that the publication of these conversations in England has not had the effect the Kaiser wished, and in our own country has caused profound agitation and painful regret, will—this firm conviction I have acquired during these anxious days—lead the Kaiser for the future, in private conversation also, to maintain the reserve that is equally indispensable in the interest of a uniform policy and for the authority of the Crown ["Bravo!" on the Right].

If it were not so, I could not, nor could my successor, bear the responsibility ["Bravo!" on the Right and National Liberals].

For the fault which occurred in dealing with the manuscript I accept, as I have caused to be said in the *Nord-deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, entire responsibility. It also goes against my personal feelings that officials who have done their duty all their lives should be stamped as transgressors because, in a single case, they relied too much on the fact that I usually read and finally decide everything myself.

With Herr von Heydebrand I regret that in the mechanism of the Foreign Office, which for eleven years has worked smoothly under me, a defect should on one occasion occur. I will answer for it that such a thing does not happen again, and that with this object, without respect to persons, though also without injustice, what is needful will be done ["Bravo!"].

When the article in the *Daily Telegraph* appeared, its fateful effect could not for a moment be doubtful to me,

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and I handed in my resignation. This decision was unavoidable, and was not difficult to come to. The most serious and most difficult decision which I ever took in my political life was, in obedience to the Kaiser's wish, to remain in office. I brought myself to this decision only because I saw in it a command of my political duty, precisely in the time of trouble, to continue to serve his Majesty the Kaiser and the country [repeated "Bravos!"]. How long that will be possible for me, I cannot say.

Let me say one thing more: at a moment when the fact that in the world much is once again changing requires serious attention to be given to the entire situation, wherever it is matter of concern to maintain our position abroad, and without pushing ourselves forward with quiet constancy to make good our interests—at such a moment we ought not to show ourselves small-spirited in foreign eyes, nor make out of a misfortune a catastrophe. I will refrain from all criticism of the exaggerations we have lived through during these last days. The harm is—as calm reflection will show—not so great that it cannot with circumspection be made good. Certainly no one should forget the warning which the events of these days have given us ["Bravo!"]—but there is no reason to lose our heads and awake in our opponents the hope that the Empire, inwardly or outwardly, is maimed.

It is for the chosen representatives of the nation to exhibit the prudence which the time demands. I do not say it for myself, I say it for the country: the support required for this is no favor, it is a duty which this honorable House will not evade [loud applause on the Right, hisses from the Socialists].

### No. V

The important part of Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg's defense of the Kaiser's speech at Königsberg is as follows:

The discourse at Königsberg is not a manifestation of absolutist opinion, inconsistent with the Constitution, but,

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it is true, a strong affirmation of the monarchical principle—which is a foundation of the Prussian State law, as well as an expression of profound religious convictions which are understood and which are shared by numerous classes of the nation. [*Lively approbation on the Right and the Centre.*]

In its development of many centuries, it is not the Prussian people that has given itself the royalty, but it is the work of the great monarchs of the House of Hohenzollern, who, seconded by the tenacity and ability of the population, has created first a Prussian nation, then a Prussian State [*Applause on various benches*].

The Prussian Constitution, which rests on these historic developments, does not recognize the conception of the sovereignty of the people. This is why the Kings of Prussia are, in relation to their own people, Kings in their own right; and if in our days it is attempted, on the democratic side, to regard the King of Prussia in a manner more lively than before as a dignitary named by the people, it is not an occasion for astonishment that the King affirms strongly his consciousness of not being subject to any sovereignty of the people.

Personal irresponsibility of the King, independence and original existence of his monarchical right, here are the fundamental ideas of our State-life, which remain alive in the period of constitutional development.

With the exception of the Social Democrats, the speakers of nearly all parties spoke in terms similar to those employed by the Chancellor, and the incident was thus closed.

### No. VI

The essential part of Kaiser William II's Letter on Religion to Admiral Hollmann is as follows:

I distinguish between two different sorts of Revelation: a current, to a certain extent historical, and a purely religious, which was meant to prepare the way for the

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appearance of the Messiah. As to the first, I should say that I have not the slightest doubt that God eternally revealed Himself to the race of mankind He created. He breathed into man His breath, that is, a portion of Himself, a soul. With fatherly love and interest He followed the development of humanity; in order to lead and encourage it further He "revealed" Himself, now in the person of this, now of that great wise man, priest or king, whether pagan, Jew or Christian. Hammurabi was one of these, Moses, Abraham, Homer, Charlemagne, Luther, Shakespeare, Goethe, Kant, Kaiser William the Great—these He selected and honoured with His Grace, to achieve for their peoples, according to His will, things noble and imperishable. How often has not my grandfather explicitly declared that he was an instrument in the hand of the Lord! The works of great souls are the gifts of God to the people, that they may be able to build further on them as models, that they may be able to feel further through the confusion of the undiscovered here below. Doubtless God has "revealed" Himself to different peoples in different ways, according to their situation and the degree of their civilization. Then just as we are overborne most by the greatness and might of the lovely nature of the Creation when we regard it, and as we look are astonished at the greatness of God there displayed, even so can we of a surety thankfully and admiringly recognize, by whatever truly great or noble thing a man or a people does, the revelation of God, His influence acts on us and among us directly.

The second sort of Revelation, the more religious sort, is that which led up to the appearance of the Lord. From Abraham onward it was introduced, slowly but foreseeingly, all-wisely and all-knowingly, for otherwise humanity were lost. And now commences the astonishing working of God's Revelation. The race of Abraham and the peoples that sprang from it regard, with an iron logic, as their holiest possession, the belief in a God. They must worship and cultivate Him. Broken up during the captivity in Egypt, the separated parts were brought together again for the second time by Moses, always striving to cling fast to monotheism. It was the direct intervention



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of God that caused this people to come to life again. And so it goes on through the centuries till the Messiah, announced and foreshadowed by the prophets and psalmists, at last appears the greatest revelation of God to the world. Then He appeared in the Son Himself; Christ is God; God in human form. He redeemed us, He spurs us on, He allures us to follow Him, we feel His fire burn in us, His sympathy strengthens us, His displeasure annihilates us, but also His care saves us. Confident of victory, building only on His Word, we pass through labor, scorn, suffering, misery, and death, for in His Word we have God's revealed Word, and He never lies.

That is my view of the matter. The Word is especially for us evangelicals made the essential thing by Luther, and as good theologian surely Delitzsch must not forget that our great Luther taught us to sing and believe—"Thou shalt suffer, let the Word stand." To me it goes without saying that the Old Testament contains a large number of fragments of a purely human historical kind and not "God's revealed Word." They are mere historical descriptions of events of all sorts which occurred in the political, religious, moral, and intellectual life of the people of Israel. For example, the act of legislation on Sinai may be regarded as only symbolically inspired by God, when Moses had recourse to the revival of perhaps some old-time law (possibly the codex, an offshoot of the codex of Hammurabi), to bring together and to bind together institutions of His people which were become shaky and incapable of resistance. Here the historian can, from the spirit or the text, perhaps construct a connexion with the Law of Hammurabi, the friend of Abraham, and perhaps logically enough; but that would no way lessen the importance of the fact that God suggested it to Moses, and in so far revealed Himself to the Israelite people.

Consequently it is my idea that for the future our good Professor would do well to avoid treating of religion as such, on the other hand continue to describe unmolested everything that connects the religion, manners, and customs of the Babylonians with the Old Testament. On the whole, I make the following deductions:—



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1. I believe in One God.
2. We humans need, in order to teach Him, a Form, especially for our Children.
3. This Form has been to the present time the Old Testament in its existing tradition. This Form will certainly decidedly alter considerably with the discovery of inscriptions and excavations; there is nothing harmful in that, it is even no harm if the nimbus of the Chosen People loses much thereby. The kernel and substance remain always the same—God, namely, and His work.

Never was religion a result of science, but a gushing out of the heart and being of mankind, springing from its intercourse with God.

### No. VII

The substance of the Austrian demands and of the replies by Serbia is expressed in the following summaries, for which abbreviated form I am indebted to McClure's *Obstacles to Peace*, pp. 60, 61.

#### DEMANDS

1. Serbia shall suppress all anti-Austrian publications.
2. Dissolve the Narodna Odbrana and all similar societies, confiscate their funds, and prevent their re-forming.
3. Remove from public education in Serbia all teachers and teaching that are anti-Austrian.
4. Remove from military and civil service all officers and officials guilty of anti-Austrian propaganda; Austria will name the persons.
5. Accept collaboration of Austrian representatives in the suppression of anti-Austrian propaganda.
6. Take judicial proceedings against accessories to the plot against the Archduke; Austrian delegates will take part in the investigations.
7. Arrest Major Voijs Tankositch and the individual named Milan Ciganovitch.
8. Prevent and punish the illegal traffic in arms and explosives.

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9. Send to Austria explanations of all unjustifiable utterances of high Serbian officials, at home and abroad.

10. Notify without delay that the above measures are executed. Reply before 6 P.M. on Saturday, July 25.

### ANSWERS

1. Yes; will suppress all anti-Austrian publications.

2. Yes; will suppress the Narodna Odbrana and similar societies.

3. Yes; will expel all anti-Austrian teachers and teaching as soon as evidence given.

4. Yes; will expel all anti-Austrian officers and officials, if Austria will furnish names and acts of guilty persons.

5. Yes; will accept collaboration of Austrian representatives in these proceedings, as far as consonant with principles of international law and criminal procedure and neighborly relations.

6. Yes; will take the judicial proceedings; will also keep Austria informed; but cannot admit the participation of Austrians in the judicial investigations, as this would be a violation of the Constitution.

7. Yes; have arrested Tankositch; ordered arrest of Ciganovitch.

8. Yes; will suppress and punish traffic in arms and explosives.

9. Yes; will deal with the said high officials, if Austria will supply evidence.

10. Yes, will notify without delay.

If this answer not satisfactory, Serbia will abide by decision of the Hague Tribunal.

### No. VIII

The reply of Sir Edward Grey to the German bid for neutrality was as follows:

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin.*

(Telegraphic.)

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 30, 1914.*

YOUR telegram of the 29th July.

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His Majesty's Government cannot for a moment entertain the Chancellor's proposal that they should bind themselves to neutrality on such terms.

What he asks us in effect is to engage to stand by while French colonies are taken and France is beaten so long as Germany does not take French territory as distinct from the colonies.

From the material point of view such a proposal is unacceptable, for France, without further territory in Europe being taken from her, could be so crushed as to lose her position as a Great Power, and become subordinate to German policy.

Altogether apart from that, it would be a disgrace for us to make this bargain with Germany at the expense of France, a disgrace from which the good name of this country would never recover.

The Chancellor also in effect asks us to bargain away whatever obligation or interest we have as regards the neutrality of Belgium. We could not entertain that bargain, either.

Having said so much it is unnecessary to examine whether the prospect of a future general neutrality agreement between England and Germany offered positive advantages sufficient to compensate us for tying our hands now. We must preserve full freedom to act as circumstances may seem to us to require in any such unfavorable and regrettable development of the present crisis as the Chancellor contemplates.

You should speak to the Chancellor in the above sense, and add most earnestly that the one way of maintaining the good relations between England and Germany is that they should continue to work together to preserve the peace of Europe; if we succeed in this object, the natural relations of Germany and England will, I believe, be *ipso facto* improved and strengthened. For that object His Majesty's Government will work in that way with all sincerity and good-will.

And I will say this: If the peace of Europe can be preserved, and the present crisis safely passed, my own endeavor will be to promote some arrangement to which Germany could be a party, by which she could be assured

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that no aggressive or hostile policy would be pursued against her or her allies by France, Russia, and ourselves, jointly or separately. I have desired this and worked for it, as far as I could, through the last Balkan crisis, and, Germany having a corresponding object, our relations sensibly improved. The idea has hitherto been too Utopian to form the subject of definite proposals, but if this present crisis, so much more acute than any that Europe has gone through for generations, be safely passed, I am hopeful that the relief and reaction which will follow may make possible some more definite *rapprochement* between the Powers than has been possible hitherto.

### No. IX

The following is Sir Edward Grey's report of the "private" conversation referred to in the Kaiser's message to the President of the United States:

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin.*

FOREIGN OFFICE, July 29, 1914.

SIR:

After speaking to the German Ambassador this afternoon about the European situation, I said that I wished to say to him, in a quite private and friendly way, something that was on my mind. The situation was very grave. While it was restricted to the issues at present actually involved, we had no thought of interfering in it. But if Germany became involved in it, and then France, the issue might be so great it would involve all European interests; and I did not wish him to be misled by the friendly tone of our conversation—which I hoped would continue—into thinking that we should stand aside.

He said that he quite understood this, but he asked whether I meant that we should, under certain circumstances, intervene?

I replied that I did not wish to say that, or to use anything that was like a threat or an attempt to apply pres-

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sure by saying that, if things became worse, we should intervene. There would be no question of our intervening if Germany was not involved, or even if France was not involved. But we knew very well, that if the issue did become such that we thought British interests required us to intervene, we must intervene at once, and the decision would have to be very rapid, just as the decisions of other Powers had to be. I hoped that the friendly tone of our conversations would continue as at present, and that I should be able to keep as closely in touch with the German government in working for peace. But if we failed in our efforts to keep the peace, and if the issue spread so that it involved practically every European interest, I did not wish to be open to any reproach from him that the friendly tone of all our conversations had misled him or his government into supposing that we should not take action, and to the reproach that, if they had not been so misled, the course of things might have been different.

The German ambassador took no exception to what I had said; indeed, he told me that it accorded with what he had already given in Berlin as his view of the situation.

### No. X

The reply of the Austro-Hungarian Government to the proposal of Sir Edward Grey, in answer to the Imperial German Government's telegram of caution, was thought of so little importance that it was not published or referred to in the German White Book. Its substance is, however, contained in the following telegram:

*Count Berchtold to the Imperial and Royal Ambassadors at London and St. Petersburg.*

(Telegraphic.)

VIENNA, July 31, 1914.

I am telegraphing as follows to Berlin:—

Herr von Tschirschky has in accordance with his instructions yesterday communicated a discussion between Sir E. Grey and Prince Liehnowsky in which the British Sec-

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retary of State made the following announcement to the German ambassador :—

Sazonof has informed the British government that after the declaration of war by Austria-Hungary against Serbia, he is no longer in a position to deal directly with Austria-Hungary, and he therefore requests that Great Britain will again take up her work of mediation. The Russian government regarded the preliminary stoppage of hostilities as a condition precedent to this.

To this Russian declaration, Sir E. Grey remarked to Prince Lichnowsky that Great Britain thought of a mediation *à quatre*, and that she regarded this as urgently necessary if a general war was to be prevented.

I ask your Excellency to convey our warm thanks to the Secretary of State for the communications made to us through Herr von Tschirschky, and to declare to him that in spite of the change in the situation which has since arisen through the mobilization of Russia, we are quite prepared to entertain the proposal of Sir E. Grey to negotiate between us and Serbia.

The conditions of our acceptance are, nevertheless, that our military action against Serbia should continue to take its course, and that the British Cabinet should move the Russian government to bring to a standstill the Russian mobilization which is directed against us, in which case, of course, we will at once cancel the defensive military counter-measures in Galicia, which are occasioned by the Russian attitude.

### No. XI

The German reply to Great Britain's inquiry regarding the intention to respect the neutrality of Belgium is thus reported, on July 31, 1914, by the British ambassador at Berlin:

*Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey*

Received August 1

(Telegraphic)

BERLIN, *July 31, 1914.*

NEUTRALITY of Belgium, referred to in your telegram of July 31 to Sir F. Bertie.



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I have seen Secretary of State (Von Jagow), who informs me that he must consult the Emperor and the Chancellor before he could possibly answer. I gathered from what he said that he thought any reply they might give could not but disclose a certain amount of their plan of campaign in the event of war ensuing, and he was therefore very doubtful whether they could return any answer at all.—British Blue Book, I, No. 121.

### No. XII

The care observed by the French not to take the offensive or invade German territory is evident from the following secret general order of August 2, 1914, issued by General Joffre at Paris:

(1) From information received it appears that the Germans have this morning violated the French frontier at three points, namely, between Delle and Belfort, opposite Cirey-sur-Vezouze, and both to the north and south of Longwy.

Under these circumstances, the order forbidding the passage of troops eastwards beyond the line laid down by telegram No. 129—3/11 T. situated generally at a distance of 10 kilometres from the frontier, is hereby rescinded. Nevertheless, for national reasons of a moral kind and for most important reasons of diplomacy, it is absolutely necessary to leave to the Germans all responsibility for hostilities. Therefore, until further orders, covering troops will confine themselves to driving back attacking forces beyond the frontier without pursuing them and without penetrating into the territory of the enemy.

(2) The Commander-in-Chief intends to take up the general offensive only when his forces have been concentrated.

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### No. XIII

It is evident that it had been decided that unless Russia gave way entirely, and declared her total abstention from the purpose to protect Serbia, the German declaration of war on Russia, whatever its consequences, would be issued. The following report of the Imperial German Government's statements confirms this view:

*Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin, to Sir Edward Grey*

(Received August 1)

(Telegraphic)

BERLIN, *July 31, 1914.*

YOUR telegram of 31st July.

I spent an hour with Secretary of State urging him most earnestly to accept your proposal and make another effort to prevent terrible catastrophe of a European war.

He expressed himself very sympathetically towards your proposal, and appreciated your continued efforts to maintain peace, but said it was *impossible for the Imperial Government to consider any proposal until they had received an answer from Russia to their communication of to-day*; this communication, which he admitted had the form of an ultimatum, being that, unless Russia could inform the Imperial Government within twelve hours that she would immediately countermand her mobilization against Germany and Austria, Germany would be obliged on her side to mobilize at once.

I asked his Excellency why they had made their demand even more difficult for Russia to accept by asking them to demobilize in the south as well. He replied that it was in order to prevent Russia from saying all her mobilization was only directed against Austria.

His Excellency said that if the answer from Russia was not satisfactory he thought personally that your proposal merited favorable consideration, and in any case he would lay it before the Emperor and Chancellor, but he

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repeated that it was *no use discussing it until the Russian Government had sent in their answer to the German demand.*

He again assured me that both the Emperor William, at the request of the Emperor of Russia, and the German Foreign Office had even up till last night been urging Austria to show willingness to continue discussions—and telegraphic and telephonic communications from Vienna had been of a promising nature—but Russia's mobilization had spoilt everything.—British Blue Book, I, No. 121.

### No. XIV

*Sir G. Buchanan, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, to Sir Edward Grey (Received July 31).*

(Telegraphic)

ST. PETERSBURG, July 31, 1914.

It has been decided to issue orders for general mobilization.

This decision was taken in consequence of report received from Russian Ambassador in Vienna to the effect that Austria is determined not to yield to intervention of Powers, and that she is moving troops against Russia as well as against Serbia.

Russia has also reason to believe that Germany is making active military preparations, and she cannot afford to let her get a start.—British Blue Book, I, No. 113.

### No. XV

The German newspapers did not fail to contribute as much as possible to the impression that Germany was attacked. In this, however, there was a lack of co-ordination that renders it easy to expose the erroneous charges against the French. Two French professors, whose report is cited by McClure, have disproved certain widely circulated falsehoods. They say:

As we wished to ascertain whether the German newspapers had given a more detailed account of these oc-

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currenees, we consulted five of the principal newspapers (*Vorwaerts*, *Arbeiter Zeitung* of Vienna. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, *Kölnische Zeitung*, *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten*) from the end of July to the 5th of August. First of all we noticed that the aviator who is said to have flown over Karlsruhe is not mentioned. As for the others, the account of them is as vague as it is in the official note. These incidents, given as the cause determining war, take up one line, two or three at the most. The bombs never left any trace. One of these aeroplanes, that at Wesel, is said to have been brought down; nothing is said of the aviator and what became of him, nor is there anything about the aeroplane itself. In a word, the Germans took care to draw attention to their arrival in Germany and then never spoke of them again. They were never seen to return to their starting-point.

But we have still more convincing evidence. We have been able to procure a Nuremberg newspaper, the *Frankischer Kurrier*. On the 2d of August, the day the bombs are supposed to have been thrown, not a word is said about the incident. Nuremberg received the news on the 3d by a telegram from Berlin identical to that published by the other newspapers. Again, the *Kölnische Zeitung* of the 3d, in its morning edition, published a telegram from Munich which read as follows: "The Bavarian Minister of War is doubtful as to the exactness of the news announcing that aviators had been seen above the lines Nuremberg-Kitzingen and Nuremberg-Anspach and that they had thrown bombs on the railway."

### No. XVI

The following telegrams explain the circumstances which determined the entrance of Great Britain into the war:

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin.*

(Telegraphic.)

FOREIGN OFFICE, August 4, 1914.

THE King of the Belgians has made an appeal to His

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Majesty the King for diplomatic intervention on behalf of Belgium in the following terms:—

“Remembering the numerous proofs of your Majesty’s friendship and that of your predecessor, and the friendly attitude of England in 1870 and the proof of friendship you have just given us again, I make a supreme appeal to the diplomatic intervention of your Majesty’s Government to safeguard the integrity of Belgium.”

His Majesty’s Government are also informed that the German Government have delivered to the Belgian Government a note proposing friendly neutrality entailing free passage through Belgian territory, and promising to maintain the independence and integrity of the kingdom and its possessions at the conclusion of peace, threatening in case of refusal to treat Belgium as an enemy. An answer was requested within twelve hours.

We also understand that Belgium has categorically refused this as a flagrant violation of the law of nations.

His Majesty’s Government are bound to protest against this violation of a treaty to which Germany is a party in common with themselves, and must request an assurance that the demand made upon Belgium will not be proceeded with and that her neutrality will be respected by Germany. You should ask for an immediate reply.—British Blue Book, I, No. 153.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador at Berlin.*

(Telegraphic.) FOREIGN OFFICE, August 4, 1914.

WE hear that Germany has addressed note to Belgian Minister for Foreign Affairs stating that German Government will be compelled to carry out, if necessary, by force of arms, the measures considered indispensable.

We are also informed that Belgian territory has been violated at Gemmenich.

In these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Germany declined to give the same assurance respecting Belgium as France gave last week in reply to our request made simultaneously at Berlin and Paris, we must repeat that request, and ask that a satisfactory reply to it and to my telegram of this morning be received here by 12

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o'clock to-night. If not, you are instructed to ask for your passports, and to say that His Majesty's Government feel bound to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany is as much a party as ourselves.—British Blue Book, I, No. 159.

*Sir E. Goschen, British Ambassador in Berlin, to Sir Edward Grey.*

LONDON, August 8, 1914.

Sir,

IN accordance with the instructions contained in your telegram of the 4th instant I called upon the Secretary of State that afternoon and enquired, in the name of His Majesty's Government, whether the Imperial Government would refrain from violating Belgian neutrality. Herr von Jagow at once replied that he was sorry to say that his answer must be "No," as, in consequence of the German troops having crossed the frontier that morning, Belgian neutrality had been already violated. Herr von Jagow again went into the reasons why the Imperial Government had been obliged to take this step, namely, that they had to advance into France by the quickest and easiest way, so as to be able to get well ahead with their operations and endeavor to strike some decisive blow as early as possible. It was a matter of life and death for them, as if they had gone by the more southern route they could not have hoped, in view of the paucity of roads and the strength of the fortresses, to have got through without formidable opposition entailing great loss of time. This loss of time would have meant time gained by the Russians for bringing up their troops to the German frontier. Rapidity of action was the great German asset, while that of Russia was an inexhaustible supply of troops. I pointed out to Herr von Jagow that this *fait accompli* of the violation of the Belgian frontier rendered, as he would readily understand, the situation exceedingly grave, and I asked him whether there was not still time to draw back and avoid possible consequences, which both he and I would deplore. He replied that, for the reasons he had given me, it was now impossible for them to draw back.



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During the afternoon I received your further telegram of the same date, and, in compliance with the instructions herein contained, I again proceeded to the Imperial Foreign Office and informed the Secretary of State that unless the Imperial Government could give the assurance by 12 o'clock that night that they would proceed no further with their violation of the Belgian frontier and stop their advance, I had been instructed to demand my passports and inform the Imperial Government that His Majesty's Government would have to take all steps in their power to uphold the neutrality of Belgium and the observance of a treaty to which Germany was as much a party as themselves.

Herr von Jagow replied that to his great regret he could give no other answer than that which he had given me earlier in the day, namely, that the safety of the Empire rendered it absolutely necessary that the Imperial troops should advance through Belgium. I gave his Excellency a written summary of your telegram and, pointing out that you had mentioned 12 o'clock as the time when His Majesty's Government would expect an answer, asked him whether, in view of the terrible consequences which would necessarily ensue, it were not possible even at the last moment that their answer should be reconsidered. He replied that if the time given were even twenty-four hours or more, his answer must be the same. I said that in that case I should have to demand my passports. This interview took place at about 7 o'clock. In a short conversation which ensued Herr von Jagow expressed his poignant regret at the crumbling of his entire policy and that of the Chancellor, which had been to make friends with Great Britain, and then, through Great Britain, to get closer to France. I said that this sudden end to my work in Berlin was to me also a matter of deep regret and disappointment, but that he must understand that under the circumstances and in view of our engagements, His Majesty's Government could not possibly have acted otherwise than they had done.

I then said that I should like to go and see the Chancellor, as it might be, perhaps, the last time I should have an opportunity of seeing him. He begged me to do so. I

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found the Chancellor very agitated. His Excellency at once began a harangue, which lasted for about twenty minutes. He said that the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree; just for a word—"neutrality," a word which in war time had so often been disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war on a kindred nation who desired nothing better than to be friends with her. All his efforts in that direction had been rendered useless by this last terrible step, and the policy to which, as I knew, he had devoted himself since his accession to office had tumbled down like a house of cards. What we had done was unthinkable; it was like striking a man from behind while he was fighting for his life against two assailants. He held Great Britain responsible for all the terrible events that might happen. I protested strongly against that statement, and said that, in the same way as he and Herr von Jagow wished me to understand that for strategical reasons it was a matter of life and death to Germany to advance through Belgium and violate the latter's neutrality, so I would wish him to understand that it was, so to speak, a matter of "life and death" for the honor of Great Britain that she should keep her solemn engagement to do her utmost to defend Belgium's neutrality if attacked. That solemn compact simply had to be kept, or what confidence could anyone have in engagements given by Great Britain in the future? The Chancellor said, "But at what price will that compact have been kept. Has the British Government thought of that?" I hinted to his Excellency as plainly as I could that fear of consequences could hardly be regarded as an excuse for breaking solemn engagements, but his Excellency was so excited, so evidently overcome by the news of our action, and so little disposed to hear reason that I refrained from adding fuel to the flame by further argument. As I was leaving he said that the blow of Great Britain joining Germany's enemies was all the greater that almost up to the last moment he and his Government had been working with us and supporting our efforts to maintain peace between Austria and Russia. I said that this was part of the tragedy which saw the two nations fall apart just

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at the moment when the relations between them had been more friendly and cordial than they had been for years.—British Blue Book, I, No. 160.

### No. XVII

The attitude of Italy regarding the *casus fæderis* with Austria-Hungary is shown in the following communication of August 3, 1914, made by the French ambassador at London to Sir Edward Grey:

In reply to the German Government's intimation of the fact that ultimatums had been presented to France and Russia, and to the question as to what were the intentions of Italy, the Marquis di San Giuliano replied:—

“The war undertaken by Austria, and the consequences which might result, had, in the words of the German Ambassador himself, an aggressive object. Both were therefore in conflict with the purely defensive character of the Triple Alliance, and in such circumstances Italy would remain neutral.”

In making this communication, M. Cambon was instructed to lay stress upon the Italian declaration that the present war was not a defensive but an aggressive war, and that, for this reason, the *casus fæderis* under the terms of the Triple Alliance did not arise.—British Blue Book, I, No. 152.

### No. XVIII

The only written agreement to protect France on the part of Great Britain is contained in the following letter of November 22, 1912, written by Sir Edward Grey to M. Paul Cambon, French ambassador at London:

FOREIGN OFFICE, *November 22, 1912.*

My dear Ambassador,

FROM time to time in recent years the French and Brit-

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ish naval and military experts have consulted together. It has always been understood that such consultation does not restrict the freedom of either Government to decide at any future time whether or not to assist the other by armed force. We have agreed that consultation between experts is not, and ought not to be regarded as, an engagement that commits either Government to action in a contingency that has not arisen and may never arise. The disposition, for instance, of the French and British fleets respectively at the present moment is not based upon an engagement to co-operate in war.

You have, however, pointed out that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, it might become essential to know whether it could in that event depend upon the armed assistance of the other.

I agree that, if either Government had grave reason to expect an unprovoked attack by a third Power, or something that threatened the general peace, it should immediately discuss with the other whether both Governments should act together to prevent aggression and to preserve peace, and, if so, what measures they would be prepared to take in common. If these measures involved action, the plans of the General Staffs would at once be taken into consideration, and the Governments would then decide what effect should be given to them.

Yours, Etc.,

E. GREY.

British Blue Book, I, Enclosure I in No. 105.

The manner in which this very attenuated engagement was understood by Sir Edward Grey in July, 1914, is shown in the following letter to Sir F. Bertie, British ambassador at Paris:

FOREIGN OFFICE, *July 29, 1914.*

Sir,

AFTER telling M. Cambon [French ambassador at London] to-day how grave the situation seemed to be, I told him that I meant to tell the German ambassador to-day

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that he must not be misled by the friendly tone of our conversations into any sense of false security that we should stand aside if all the efforts to preserve the peace, which we were now making in common with Germany, failed. But I went on to say to M. Cambon that I thought it necessary to tell him also that public opinion here approached the present difficulty from a quite different point of view from that taken during the difficulty as to Morocco a few years ago. In the case of Morocco the dispute was one in which France was primarily interested, and in which it appeared that Germany, in an attempt to crush France, was fastening a quarrel on France on a question that was the subject of a special agreement between France and us. In the present case the dispute between Austria and Servia was not one in which we felt called to take a hand. Even if the question became one between Austria and Russia we should not feel called upon to take a hand in it. It would then be a question of the supremacy of Teuton or Slav—a struggle for supremacy in the Balkans; and our idea had always been to avoid being drawn into a war over a Balkan question. If Germany became involved and France became involved, we had not made up our minds what we should do; it was a case that we should have to consider. France would then have been drawn into a quarrel which was not hers, but in which, owing to her alliance, her honor and interest obliged her to engage. We were free from engagements, and we should have to decide what British interests required us to do. I thought it necessary to say that, because, as he knew, we were taking all precautions with regard to our fleet, and I was about to warn Prince Lichnowsky not to count on our standing aside, but it would not be fair that I should let M. Cambon be misled into supposing that this meant that we had decided what to do in a contingency that I still hoped might not arise.

M. Cambon said that I had explained the situation very clearly. He understood it to be that in a Balkan quarrel, and in a struggle for supremacy between Teuton and Slav, we should not feel called to intervene; should other issues be raised, and Germany and France become involved, so that the question became one of the hegemony of Europe,

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we should then decide what it was necessary for us to do. He seemed quite prepared for this announcement, and made no criticism upon it.

He said French opinion was calm, but decided. He anticipated a demand from Germany that France would be neutral while Germany attacked Russia. This assurance France, of course, could not give; she was bound to help Russia if Russia was attacked.—British Blue Book, I, No. 87.

The manner in which France understood the engagement is shown in President Poincaré's letter of July 31, 1914, to H. M. King George V, which affirms:

It is true that our military and naval arrangements leave complete liberty to your Majesty's Government, and that, in the letters exchanged in 1912 between Sir Edward Grey and M. Paul Cambon, Great Britain and France entered into nothing more than a mutual agreement to consult one another in the event of a European tension, and to examine in concert whether common action was advisable.—British Blue Book, I, Appendix I, V, No. 1.





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